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The Editors
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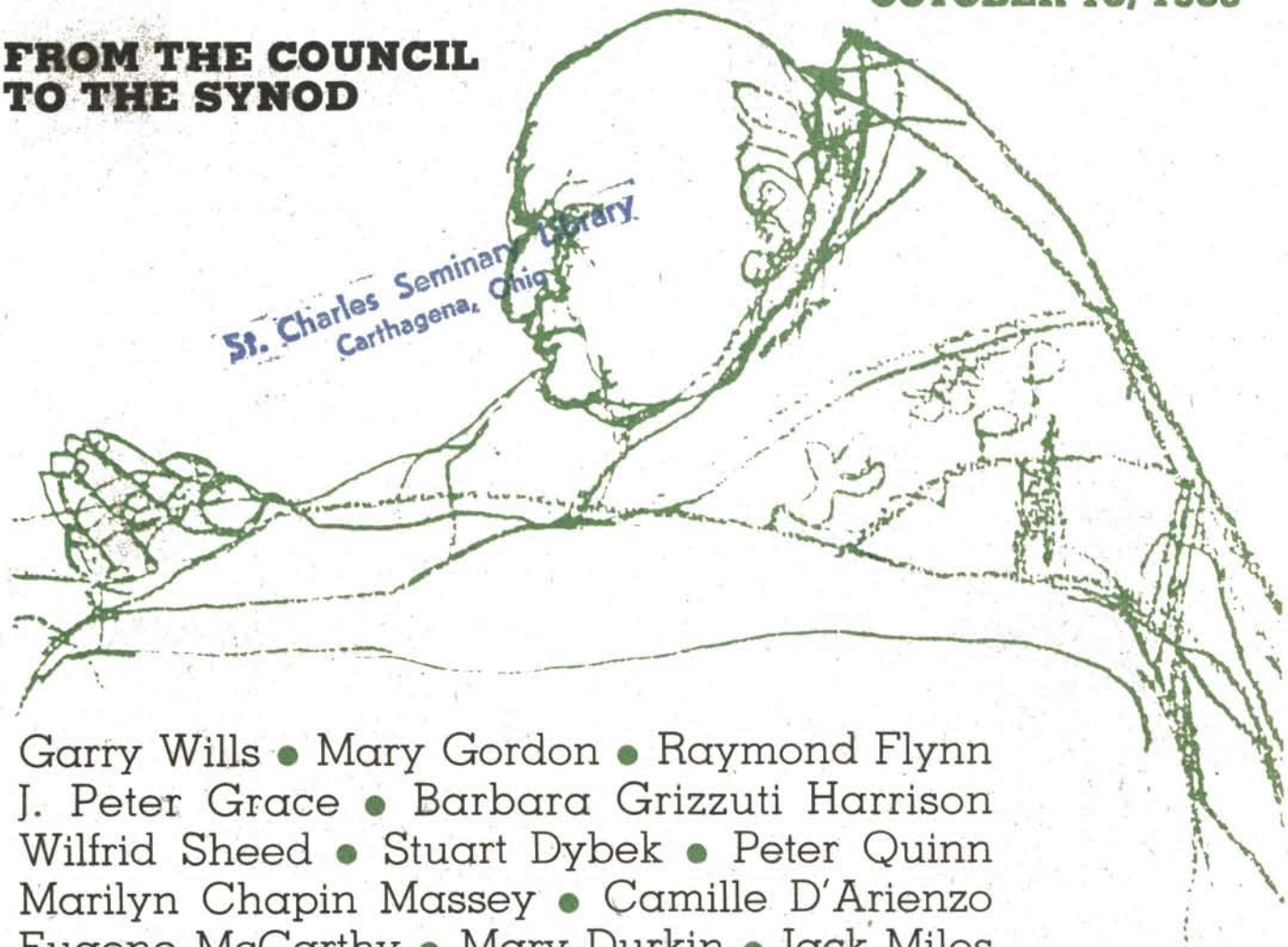

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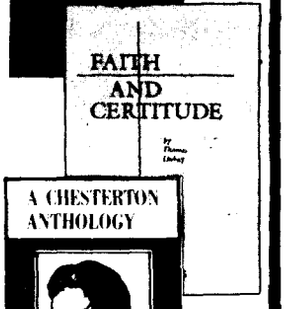

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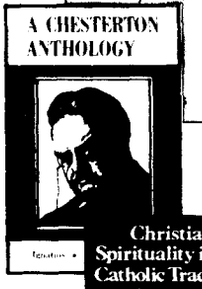

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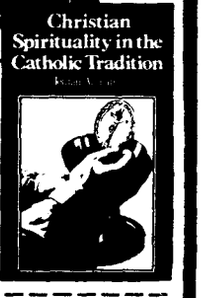

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Correspondence

Precarious balance

Collegeville, Minn.

To the Editors: I want to support Avery Dulles's *media via* solution to the problem of authority ["Authority: the Divided Legacy," July 12]. The choice is not between theological freedom and theological discipline; one choses them both simultaneously. Here I find a model in Cardinal Newman, who fought on two fronts against what he termed "liberalism" and obscurantism. For Newman liberalism in theology was a species of rationalism which made the human mind the measure of the mystery of God.

In rereading the history of the Oxford movement this summer I came to appreciate again what the discovery of a center of authority meant to Newman, the Wilberforces, and Manning. How widespread is the confusion without it. To a large extent they arrived at this conviction not by reading the contemporary Catholic authors; they were studying Irenaeus, Augustine, Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, and the two Gregories. From the patristic writers they learned a respect for authority at the heart of the mystery of the church. The sense of continuity and apostolic life were bound up with a structure of authority which was not reducible merely to the canonical and legal aspects of the church. They had to do with the mystery of the church and the struggle of the church to live in history.

After his entry into the Catholic church, Newman suffered from the Roman obscurantism of Cardinal Barnabo, Monsignor Talbot, Father Faber, and W.G. Ward. Newman never allowed this kind of ecclesiastical narrowness to deprive him of his openness to contemporary culture, modes of theological language, and to authentic regionalism. He was convinced that for a thing to be true it needed more than to be spoken in Rome. This balance in Newman between theological freedom and theological discipline was achieved at the cost of considerable pain. Perhaps his witness will prompt us to that precarious balance.

KILIAN McDONNELL, O.S.B.

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Early to learn

Bronxville, N.Y.

To the Editors: The August 9 issue was splendid. Besides my particular interest in the articles on women and the church ["The Discipleship of Equals," by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and "Finding Our Voices," by Mimi D'Aponte], I was happy that you republished your comments on Hiroshima, August 1945.

I was a subscriber then, and was grateful *Commonweal* expressed my reaction and that of my friend and neighbor as we wept together under her clothes-reel. Subsequently she shared her house for a month with two of the Hiroshima victims who came to the U.S. for treatment through the work of Norman Cousins. Her children and ours learned an early awareness of the horror of the use of the atom bomb.

ELEANOR HAYES GISOLFI

Pastoral on equality

West Hyattsville, Md.

To the Editors: Kudos to you for your series on unanswered questions in the church in anticipation of the extraordinary November synod.

Mimi D'Aponte has done laudable work in identifying various groups addressing women's issues ["Finding Our Voices, Grassroots 1985," August 9]. We raise only one point for the record. While D'Aponte has only recently learned about Priests for Equality, PFE is one of the earliest grassroots organizations working for sexual equality as mandated by Vatican II. We celebrated our tenth anniversary in July. We have members in thirty-four countries around the world (New Zealand is the latest country to be represented).

Between January and June of this year we have distributed 51,000 copies of our draft pastoral on equality, *Toward a Full and Equal Sharing*, to such groups as LCWR, CMSM, Chicago Catholic Women, NARW, Women's Ordination Conference, Quixote Center, NFPC, each bishop in the United States, and each priest in the archdiocese of Detroit.

By the end of August we were anticipating more than 500 personal responses and comments on the draft. By comparison, the first draft to the bishop's pastoral on the economy received 1000 personal responses. Like Avis, we'll gladly take second place, but watch out your excellencies . . . !

REV. JOSEPH A. DEARBORN

Removing blinkers

Sydney, Nova Scotia

To the Editors: I would like to respond to your editorial "Should We Go to War with Nicaragua?" [June 21]. Your conclusion that "current developments demand an unmistakable protest" is welcome, but the editorial is flawed by the comfortable assumption that one need not take sides. The piece shows a distressing tendency to assume that the truth can be found by simply finding the middle ground between two extreme positions. Unfortunately, the upshot of this is that, as the Reagan administration escalates its campaign of lies about Nicaragua, the truth moves conveniently to the right. There is no substitute for the difficult and time-consuming task of studying Nicaragua in the context of Central American history and U.S. interference in the region.

(Continued on page 588)

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Contents

Volume CXII, Number 18

Correspondence	548
Editorials	549
Making use of religion: *John Garvey*	551
Freedom & integrity in church & state *J. Bryan Hehir*	554
How things are getting better in Guatemala: *Gordon L. Bowen*	555
From the council to the synod: *Raymond Flynn, Mary Durkin, Jack Miles, Peter Quinn, Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, J. Peter Grace, Tom Fox, Wilfrid Sheed, Mary Gordon, Marilyn Chapin Massey, Jean Vanier, Eugene McCarthy, Juli Loesch, Camille D'Arienzo, Keith C. Burris, Mary Pat Kelly, Palma E. Formica, Stuart Dybek, Nancy Rambusch, Joseph Sobran, Garry Wills*	559
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	582

Books

A Preface to Economic Democracy: *David P. Ellerman*	584
The Morrow Anthology of Younger American Poets: *Paul West*	586

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SOUTH AFRICA: AT BREAKNECK SPEED

THE BLOODY REVOLUTION in South Africa has begun. More than 700 people have died in the last thirteen months — mere kindling for the mighty conflagration to come. President Reagan's national security advisor, Robert McFarlane, has said it clearly: "Pretoria is looking into an abyss of massive violence." Tragically, Pretoria seems not only to have a propensity but a desire to do so. The longer it delays reform, the deeper the chasm. There must be a better way.

The reforms President P.W. Botha announced in a series of disappointing addresses this summer fell decidedly short of substantive change. They appear to be stonewalling rather than foundation building. His offer of citizenship for those living in the so-called homelands (black ghettos created and circumscribed by the white government) proved a cipher. It granted neither social nor political equality, and specifically denied the right to vote. The removal of impediments to racially mixed marriages was likewise elusive. Whereas individuals from different races can now marry, because of racial housing zoning they still cannot legally live together. President Botha summarized his reforms in a recent *Business Week* interview (October 7). Clenching his fists, he said: "We must have controls."

This governmental paralysis contrasts appreciably with a range of self-examination and surprise movement that has suddenly developed in South Africa's business community. While opponents of foreign divestiture in South Africa have repeatedly said disinvestment would have little effect on Pretoria, events are proving otherwise. True, the present disinvestment wave has not come from foreign governments and corporations. It has come from a generally unanticipated quarter, one thought to have been immune to such social leverage, the international banking community. Suddenly looking at their assured loans teetering on the brink of an enveloping abyss, the bankers' confidence eroded overnight in September. Swiftly they began withdrawing lines of credit. Pretoria was forced to close its economic exchanges, freeze repayment of its foreign debt until January, and restructure its currency. Business leaders began talking of the unspeakable — real change. Some flew to Zambia to meet with Oliver Tambo, president of the outlawed African National Congress. Some called for Mr. Botha's resignation, as had *Business Day*, South Africa's equivalent of the *Wall Street Journal*.

On September 29, ninety-one leading South African businessmen, including Afrikaners and representatives of international corporations, signed an advertisement entitled, "There Is a Better Way." It called for the abolition of apartheid, negotiations with "acknowledged black leaders," and power sharing. In the words of Anton Rupert, head of the powerful Afrikaner-dominated Rembrandt Group, South Africa must now "transform the structure of the country toward fair participation for all." Apartheid is dead, he said, "It must be buried, not embalmed."

Nor is there time to spare. According to *The New Republic* (September 9) there

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has as yet been little mass terrorism by blacks because of "the Christian spirit that infuses much of the anti-apartheid movement within South Africa." That is a remarkable testament. Yet the period of its half-life may have nearly expired. (The author Alan Paton once told an American reporter that the ruling National party was devoted to "stamping out nonviolence.") There is a growing generation gap between restive young blacks and their traditional leaders, many of whom are in prison, have been exiled, or have already been killed. Unless moderates like the United Democratic Front have something to show soon, events will surely pass them by. Nelson Mandela, the black majority's indisputable leader, languishes in jail in failing health. Worldwide pleas for his release go unheeded. Should he die in prison, there would undoubtedly be fewer tomorrows for South Africa.

Blacks have shown increasing power through the use of boycotts and unionization, forcing local business people to bring pressure on the government to make changes. In May a black boycott of white stores at Kenton-on-Sea, where there was but one water faucet for more than two thousand residents of the "emergency camp," brought not only more water faucets but the removal of the whites' garbage dump from the middle of the camp. And despite a faltering strike at seven mines in August, the power of black labor unions is growing and appears irreversible. Their membership is now 700,000. In November, sixteen black unions, including the National Union of Mine Workers, will form a "super federation."

For the country's disenfranchised blacks, three-quarters of South Africa's population, there is but one demand: inclusion on all levels, encapsulated in the slogan, "One man, one vote," a phrase which expresses democratic aspirations but ignores the need to guarantee the rights of South Africa's many minorities, of all races. Barring partition, which Andries Treurnicht of the far rightist Conservative party has already called for as the logical extension of apartheid, full power sharing is the only goal on the table. How to achieve it in a reasonable time frame while containing the centrifugal forces now ready to burst the country apart will be one of the greatest tests of the century. It means that the United States should actively pursue what Secretary of State George P. Shultz recently called "the centerpiece of our policy": political dialogue and negotiation between the South African government and representative black leaders. It should be pursued on an immediate, daily, and continuing basis. But it must not be left to the Reagan administration alone. It should be pressed on every available level in this country — religious, financial, social, and political — lest the world think we do not care. So far, Washington has little to show for past half-measures.

No one has stated the situation of South Africa today more succinctly and realistically than Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda. "Power," he said recently, "must be given to all the people of South Africa, all of them. The five million whites are as African as I am, and so are the twenty-four million blacks. So are the coloreds, and the Indians. They have to sit together to discuss their future. If they do not, the explosion we have been fearing will take place. When it happens — not if, but when — it will make the French Revolution look like a Sunday school picnic. Black and white will perish, not by the thousands as in Zimbabwe, but by the hundreds of thousands. We will have to move at breakneck speed, with only the possibility of averting it." A better way must be tried.

ECONOMY PASTORAL II

The second draft of the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on the U.S. economy has just appeared. It is a somewhat shorter and definitely more pastoral revision. By folding the topics of employment, poverty, food and agriculture, and the world economy into a single long chapter, the bishops have tried to keep their prudential judgments on these "Selected Economic Policy Issues" from completely eclipsing the more fundamental "Christian Vision of Economic Life" which ought to be forming the conscience of the Catholic population. A new introduction makes it clear that the bishops have in mind not only the immediate needs of the poor but also the persistent economic anxieties of many middle-income Americans and the marketplace dilemmas that regularly confront morally sensitive managers and investors. At a number of points, the draft pulls back from earlier formulations that were either factually questionable or, more often, simply provocative. In a teaching exercise like this one, the committee has obviously been concerned about unnecessarily alienating people. Yet the outstanding fact is the continuity, not the differences, between the two drafts. The bishops have stuck to their guns.

That won't keep their conservative critics from poking for weaknesses and gnawing away at this or that phrase. Critics to the bishops' left have as many, or more, justified concerns; but given the climate of the times, they are apt to be gentler. A continuing discussion may be fruitful, but this is already a solid, helpful document. Has anyone else entertained the idea that the bishops should revise their plans and *approve* this letter at their approaching November meeting? A lively discussion of church teaching and the economy could thereby continue on a wider basis than simply fine-tuning this letter, while the rudiments of the consensus already obtained might be communicated to the pews.

DEBT TO OUR CHILDREN

Last year Congress unanimously passed the Child Support Enforcement Amendment, which provided the states a handy set of tools for collecting delinquent child support payments. The federal law went into effect October 1. It is now up to the states to pass conforming legislation which, if effective, could reduce a domestic debt that has been piling up for years — the debt to America's children — some $3 billion in 1983 alone.

Twenty-two percent of the nation's children live with only one parent. Ninety percent of the time that parent is the child's mother — some nine million mothers nationwide. The remaining 10 percent of single parents includes fathers, relatives, and friends. Although child support is awarded to the parent with custody at the time of separation (whether parents have di-

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vorced, separated, or never married), less than half the parents awarded child support receive the full amount. Seventy-five percent do receive some money, but 25 percent receive none. Why hasn't the law been enforced?

For the last ten years, enforcement programs were aimed at absentee parents whose children were covered by AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). The rationale was that payments received would defray welfare costs. But enforcement proved costly and the amounts recovered were meager.

Under the new legislation strict compliance is required across all income levels so that cost effectiveness seems probable. When a payment is thirty days overdue, the new law requires the states to garnish the owing parent's wages. Other pressures can be applied as necessary: state or federal tax refunds can be intercepted; liens can be put on real or personal property. In one state where the lien on property has been in force, for example, a delinquent father's yacht was impounded. Frequent offenders can be required to post bond as a guarantee of payment. Consumer credit bureaus can be notified of the amount an individual owes. Furthermore, the cutoff for filing paternity suits — which until now varied widely among states — has been uniformly set at the age of majority.

Fortunately, the teeth in the new law look sharp, and there is no reason to believe states will not comply with federal standards. The message should be clear: responsibility for children belongs to both parents. But isn't it ironic that the penalty for a state's noncompliance is a cut in the federal contribution to AFDC, which would only rob children, the very persons the law is designed to protect?

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

MAKING USE OF RELIGION

SIMON MAGUS WAS SINCERE

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying "Give me also this power, that anyone on whom I lay my hand may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

Acts 8: 18-24 (RSV)

THERE IS SOMETHING particularly poignant in the story of the magician Simon, who according to the Acts of the Apostles was neither a bad man nor a manipulation wizard, but a believer who got it wrong. He was an apparently sincere convert, who responded to Philip's preaching and was amazed, after his baptism, at the great works which attended the preaching of the Gospel. His response to Peter is hardly an arrogant one. His story has been used through the ages to illustrate the wrongness of buying or selling church offices and blessings, but the meaning is certainly deeper than that. It doesn't have to do with simple monetary gain; much more importantly, Simon thought he could make use of a religious teaching in order to enhance his own power. He believed this power was something he could attain. At one level, of course, his wrongness was in thinking that the power he sought could be bought. But what we have to fear is that money is only one way to buy something; it is hardly the only medium of exchange, even if one of the crudest.

Simon was sincere. At the moment when he asked if he could buy the power which the apostles had, he no doubt thought he was doing something right, or at the very least was unaware that he was doing anything wrong. The problem is that he was still too formed by everything which had formed him — all of the habits of thinking and feeling which made him the man he was. Something in him, something which was the seed of whatever Simon was meant to become, was capable of responding to Philip's teaching. But there was something else in him, and it was capable — with all the best intentions in the world — of being mis-

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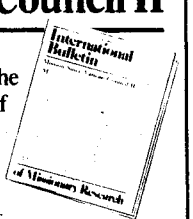

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led. That something else, that bundle of formed responses which is a great deal of what we consider ourselves, responded with a profound misunderstanding of what the power of God means. This part should worry us. And Peter told him, "Your heart is not right before God," and the part of Simon which was in fact on the right track responded with a plea that Peter pray for him, to keep him from the harm that can come from going in the wrong direction.

This is, to say the least, a mysterious story. It is especially mysterious in a time which makes sincerity a virtue and in which good intentions count for so much. The idea that it is possible to go in the wrong direction even if you would like to do the right thing is disturbing to us, and seems profoundly unfair. It is also unfair when a blind grandmother hits the roller skate at the top of a flight of stairs — she certainly didn't *mean* to do that — but it happens in the universe we live in, a universe which believers insist was, in a way none of us can claim to understand, intended.

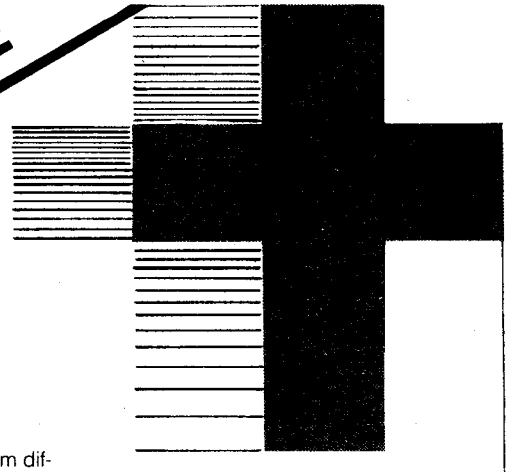
The point of religious traditions is in part to make us aware of the fact that wanting to do the right thing is not quite the same thing as knowing the right way; good intentions can lead us over cliffs, and a wily approach, if it is headed in the right direction, may serve us better than sincerity. This could be part of the meaning of Jesus' mysterious lines about making friends with the mammon of iniquity. It certainly has something to do with his counsel that we be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

What concerns me about the current use of religion is precisely that it is a *use*. Right, left, and middle make use of religion. Buddhism in America is, compared to Buddhism in Thailand, often a homogenized thing, cleansed of any moral discipline. It is, in some of the literature I've seen, so cleansed of asceticism and doctrinal force that it couldn't scandalize a Unitarian. There are Sufis who deny that Sufism is really part of the Islamic tradition; it is instead a surfacing of an eternal truth which happened to take place in Islam.

This use of religion has cultural and political, as well as religious dimensions. From one point of view the argument can be made that the Buddhists in America and the Sufis in England (where they seem to be more popular than they are here) are making good use of a missionary strategy which is echoed by various Christian missionaries in Africa and Asia. Shouldn't Christianity be stripped of its European fixations when it is presented to people from other cultures? The same ought to apply to Buddhism moving West.

The problem is that it is not so simple in practice, whether the practice is that of the Buddhist moving West or the Christian moving East. A Christian of the Enlightenment will discover one truth of Christ, and call it essential; a medieval Christian will discover another; St. Paul spoke of another. Tradition in its most subtle and strong sense is the harmony in all of these voices. It is not a distillate which any one of us can perceive to be right and true. We cannot assume that our

FAITH IN DIALOGUE



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point of view is more clear than that of someone else in our tradition, nor for that matter should we assume that it is false. We should look for what it is that makes all of the voices forming our tradition a conciliar thing, and we should approach this humbly.

I have used tradition myself, pulling the odd fact out of context to prove a point. I was wrong to do that. It is true that facts can be used to show that absolutist conceptions of truth defined once-and-for-all are demonstrably weak. But the simple fact put up against th absolute statement doesn't make th whole edifice crumble; it only shows that what we are dealing with is a harmony of faith, a series of chords, not a fortress.

Tradition can be seen as a fossilized thing, but it is, when it is living and truly orthodox, a language before which the language's sharer must be humble. It does not exist for the hearer and speaker of the language as he or she is, presently, to use in a way which underscores the hearer's present status or point of view. It is meant rather to transform the hearer and user of the language, to bring the hearer into the deepest experience of the church. The Orthodox belief is that, even granting historical limitations and cultural limitations, the language which becomes the language of prayer and worship can be Spirit-bearing when full attention is paid to it. This is easier to say than to live out, because self-deception is a large part of the human enterprise, and it is too easy to mistake an emotional or self-justifying response to the words of the liturgy for real attention.

The only alternative is humility, an honesty about our own unknowing. To be honest about the terrible failings of historical Christianity without at the same time buying into the spirit of the age leaves us vulnerable, within a tradition which is no longer seen as imperial and strong but might at last be able to participate in the poverty of Christ. There is a danger here, too: "The spirit of the age" can be defined as any of those things with which we are ideologically uncomfortable, from the point of view of a conservative or liberal or left-wing form of Christianity. There is a disturbing similarity of tone which can be found in the *National Catholic Reporter, National Catholic Register, Axios,* and *Sojourners*. I say nothing of the "us" against "them" righteousness of *The Wanderer*. Simon's problem was not that he did not want to do what was right, but that his heart was "not right before God," and he was told to repent and pray that "if possible" he might be forgiven. This sort of talk is much scarier than the sort we are likely to hear from pulpits. But that talk usually aims to reassure us in some way. I am writing this a few days after the earthquake in Mexico, which had nothing to do with what the people there had in mind, and has everything to do with the God we have a glimpse of in the book of Job. That God is not one our culture, including our religious or political culture, spends much time on. The humility which our wonderful and horrible universe demands must be absolute; nothing of our religion may be used if we are honest; and where we are not sure in our own experience that something is true, silence is essential.

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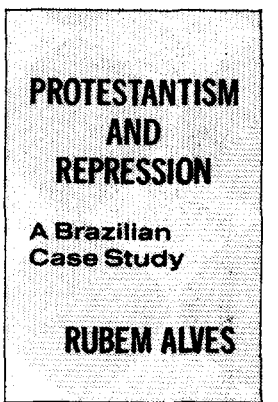

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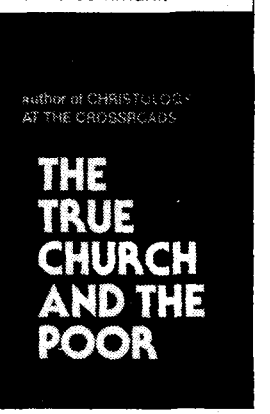

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Church/world watch

Freedom & integrity in church & state

J. Bryan Hehir

A YEAR AGO the nation was in the midst of a presidential campaign shot through with religious themes, claims, and contentions. Both candidates gave speeches devoted to their religious convictions and how they related them to public office. In the Catholic community the autumn of '84 produced substantial, detailed public lectures by Cardinals Bernardin and O'Connor and by Governor Cuomo and Congressman Hyde on the topic of religion, morality, and politics. The secular editorial commentary on the question was voluminous and the TV time accorded it extensive. Periodically, in church or state, someone would say that after the election the issues should be sorted out and analyzed in a more leisurely fashion. Some of this analysis — not nearly enough — has been going on in university symposia and research institutes.

My limited concern here is simply to note a resource for the Catholic community particularly and also, I think, for the wider community interested in pursuing the discussion of religion and politics in the more relaxed atmosphere of a year without national elections. This year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of John Courtney Murray's *We Hold These Truths*, and the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II's *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, principally drafted by Murray.

In a specific sense these two documents are the resource I mentioned above, but in a wider sense it is Murray's total work, style of argumentation, and view of the church's public role which these two anniversaries should highlight. Murray's contribution spanned three roles: he was a systematic theologian, a political philosopher, and an ecclesiologist.

As a theologian, Murray made a contribution to the universal church by preparing for and fashioning the development of doctrine in Catholic teaching on church-state relations. Murray's contribution was decisive in shifting Catholic teaching from the Post-Reformation-Vatican I position which held a "Catholic state" to be the normative goal (with its consequent restrictions on the right of religious liberty of non-Catholic citizens) to a position where the church expected from the state not favoritism but the freedom to function. He made his contribution in two stages. First, between 1945 and 1964 he argued, in a series of scholarly articles in *Theological Studies*, the case for the possibility of developing Catholic teaching in a fashion which would change its conclusions to meet new needs without forsaking key values of a Catholic perspective on the state and society. This first stage culminated with Murray designing the language of the conciliar decree less than twenty years after he had been forbidden to publish on the topic of church-state relations. A second stage of the theological contribution is found in the corpus of commentaries which Murray wrote on Vatican II's declaration. In 1985, as we seek to evaluate the event of Vatican II through the analysis of its products, no better assessment of *Religious Liberty* is available than Murray's own work. It is also true, in my view, that on the general topic of religion and politics Murray's *Theological Studies* articles of 1945-1964 provide a foundation, categories, and a sophistication which can be usefully mined by anyone seeking to shape the future discussion of these themes.

Murray's contribution as a political philosopher is to be found principally in *We Hold These Truths*. If his theological contribution was a gift to the universal church, these essays are particularly directed to the church in the United States. For a society like ours, in which the topic religion and politics is shorthand for the relationship of moral argument and public policy, Murray's assessment of the nature of a pluralistic society and the challenge it faces in shaping moral consensus is qualitatively better than most recent analysis in either the secular or religious press. His chapter on law and morality remains the best single treatment of the topic; read today, it would go far to shape a clearer public debate about abortion, even though the absence of any reference to abortion is one of the characteristics which dates *We Hold These Truths*. It is dated in other ways also, but none of the specific omissions or judgments which date it deprive the book of its fundamental value. In it Murray projects not only guidelines for a public philosophy, but a view of how the church should actively participate in the public arena. Murray took seriously the democratic character, pluralistic culture, and tremendous power of American society; he also spoke pointedly to the absence of moral direction for much of that power and to the seeming inability of Catholics to contribute to filling the moral vacuum. It would be fascinating to know what his judgment of Catholics and the public arena would be in the 1980s.

By Murray's ecclesiological contribution, I mean the scattered signals one can find in the very last years of his life, that Murray was prepared to examine the issue of freedom in the church. Throughout his campaign to win a Catholic affirmation of the right of religious liberty as a human and civil right, Murray carefully distinguished this right from the question of freedom within the church. After the battle in the secular arena had been won, he was more willing to probe the internal ques-

(Continued on page 587)

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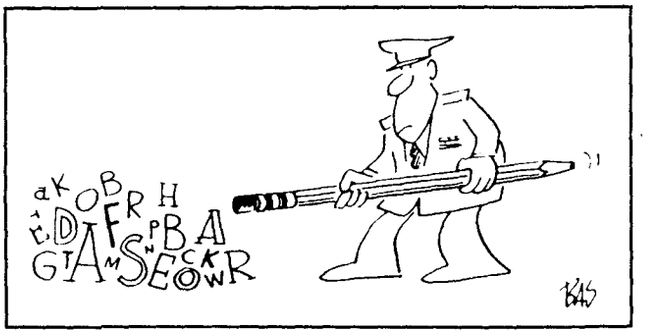
ASSASSINATIONS & ABDUCTIONS ON CAMPUS



How things are getting better in Guatemala

GORDON L. BOWEN

IN THE FIRST week of September 1985, police stormed a university campus. In the clouds of tear gas, in the students' hail of rocks and bottles, ill winds of rage are blowing. But the Reagan administration has formally proposed not to condemn these police, but to lift an eleven-year ban on all U.S. aid to them. This is not South Africa, but Central America. The campus under occupation is not in Capetown; it is Guatemala's University of San Carlos (U.S.C.), founded in 1676 and located in the center of Central America's largest metropolis. Can aid to these police occupiers really help stop terrorism, as the Reagan administration contends?

The Guatemala City U.S.C. campus long has been a lightning rod for violence. Murders and kidnappings have been endured too long on campus. Three university rectors (i.e., presidents) have fallen to assassins in recent years. However, according to the U.S. State Department, things have been improving ever since forty-five persons were violently abducted (thirty-seven of whom vanished forever) in the year immediately preceding the 1983 military coup which brought to power the country's current dictator, Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores. Indeed, the perception of an improving human rights situation, of fewer campus kidnappings for example, has been a central image in administration pleas to Congress for military and police aid.

Especially in view of the American press's erratic coverage of Guatemala, the truth of the matter may have become more obscure. Yet it remains simple. A long-brewing crisis in political and economic life spawned both earlier Guatemalan student activism and the September 1985 "street politics" which led to the occupation of the university. Student protests were only ostensibly over increases in bus fares and food prices. Though unreported on U.S. television, Guatemala's crisis this year has plunged the nation into a psychological state unknown since the panic surrounding the 1954 C.I.A.-backed coup which toppled the elected reformist President Jacobo Arbenz. Just since January 1985, the local currency (the quetzal) has lost over 60 percent of its buying power as measured in U.S. dollars, a drop more precipitous than that of the South African rand during the same period. Long pegged at one quetzal to one U.S. dollar, a quetzal now is worth twenty-five cents (down from sixty-six cents on last January 1, 1985). Economic collapse has been so rapid that the central bank recently had to sell gold reserves to pay for oil deliveries. In non-compliance with the I.M.F. and its guidelines ("you must raise taxes"), private lenders and the Guatemalan elite have taken to keeping their money outside the country. Half of the workforce is idle. After fifteen years of direct military rule, Guatemalans in 1985 have witnessed the disintegration of Central America's once most promising economy, a disintegration with wrenching impact on an already polarized society.

U.S.C. students have taken their protests to the streets several times in 1985, to publicize both narrow university issues and to articulate the broader economic grievances of most Guatemalans. In so doing they have followed a brave and precedent-rich avenue in Guatemalan history. It was U.S.C. student protests in 1944 that shook the very foundations of the long-running military dictatorship of Jorge Ubico, moves which dissident officers followed. Eventually, students and junior officers mounted a coup that ushered in the only decade of open electoral competition in the nation's history, from 1944 to 1954. Guatemalan student protests, then, are no flighty rite of spring (or fall) but, rather, form key chapters in the slim volume of Guatemalan democratic politics.

It was the struggle for fair, not rigged, elections by genuine student leaders like Oliverio Castañeda (murdered) and Antonio Ciani ("disappeared") that in 1978 led those Guatemalans opposed to an open society to begin gunning down teachers, students, deans, priests, and trade unionists. This mad "lobotomization" of society's "brain power" followed cycles of ever increasing ferocity between 1978 and 1983 (see "Guatemala: A New Form of Totalitarianism?" in *Commonweal*, Feb. 10, 1984). Dozens of U.S.C. students and

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several more teachers were killed or violently became "disappeared" later in 1984. On August 15, 1984, U.S.C. Rector Eduardo Meyer Maldonado again decried "thirty years of continued violence, during which time the university intellectual has been subjected to economic strangulation, repression, and indiscriminant aggression." A year later, on September 1, 1985, Rector Meyer set the number of university students and faculty killed or "disappeared" during the two years of the current Mejía government at over six hundred.

Virtually none of this was considered newsworthy in North America. Events also not deemed newsworthy here during this last year (from September 1984-September 1985) conclusively demonstrate the continuity of government repression against U.S.C. in particular, and the festering Guatemalan human rights problem of which university travails form but one sad, small part. Consider:

● On September 12, 1984, two U.S.C. students, Eduardo Rodriguez and Estela Jeaneth Martinez, were wounded by gunfire on campus. Another student, Otto Ivan Caceros Morales, was shot inside the Veterinary Medicine building twelve days later.

● On September 27, 1984, Prof. Miguel Angel Salazar, his wife and three young children were abducted while traveling near the tourist center of Panajachel, in the western highlands.

● On October 13, 1984, communications student Edgar Rolando Ramazzini was abducted 15 miles from the capital. His tortured cadaver then turned up near the U.S.C. campus on November 29, along with that of an agriculture student (Carlos Alfredo Molina de León). Rolando's parents had joined other parents of "disappeared" persons to form a "Mutual Support Group" (G.A.M.) in order to try to secure his release.

● On October 26, 1984, Prof. Carlos Eugenio de León Gudiel was shot dead as he returned home from the campus.

● On October 27, 1984, de León's dean and colleague, Prof. Vitalino Girón Corado, was shot dead at a gas station while on his way to de León's funeral.

● On October 29, 1984, Rector Meyer declared that death threats had been received by several members of the Supreme University Council. Guatemalan newspapers, in relating Meyer's charge, reported seventy violent deaths or abductions in the U.S.C. community in the first ten months of 1984, including U.S.C. student Hector Arturo Vasquez, who was shot on that day.

● On November 28, 1984, for the third time in a month, security forces opened fire on the U.S.C. campus, injuring several persons. One student, Hector Estuardo Marroquín Quiñonez, died the next day. U.S.C. student Eunice Púlaez Almengor also was abducted that day.

● On December 4, 1984, U.S.C. lecturer Rudy Gustavo Figueroa Munoz's tortured corpse was discovered in the capital. Formerly he had served on U.S.C.'s Supreme Council. Six U.S.C. students also were targeted that month: Two were killed and four were violently "disappeared" at the hands of

NEWS, TOO, DISAPPEARS

FACTS UNREPORTED, OR MINIMIZED

AMERICANS, who have seen student activists cripple university life and back despotism in nations as different as Iran and China, are wisely cautious about assuming that student "street politics" are automatically the buds of some free speech flower to come. But in the case of Guatemala, how can Americans reach any judgment at all when the facts about violence and university life are either unreported or minimized?

For example, the *Washington Post*'s last substantive story devoted to Guatemala's university problem was published on December 26, 1984. After reporting the (then) recent murder of three Guatemalan professors, a dean, and "dozens" of students, the report added, "The case can be made that there are now fewer killings of this character than there were a few years ago." Indeed, the University of San Carlos rector, Eduardo Meyer Maldonado, *is* still alive; his predecessors were assassinated. But is this a sign of progress in itself?

One might expect a greater sensitivity to these problems from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a weekly widely read by U.S. academics. In September 1984, the abduction of seventy-four Guatemalan students was briefly noted in the *Chronicle*. No further reference to Guatemala's university problems appeared until July 31, 1985, when it was blandly noted that three students and one professor had been kidnapped. There was not space for any of the students' names, political affiliations, or the circumstances of their abductions, although the *Chronicle* was able to inform its readers that some Guatemalans believe the university to be "a haven for leftist guerrillas." When the paper reported "twelve injuries and five hundred arrests" preceding this fall's occupation of U.S.C. by police, no mention was made of kidnappings or killings on campus.

It is not only Guatemalan academics and students who are invisible. When the Polish priest Father Jersy Popieluszko vanished in 1984, the *Washington Post* ran thirty-one separate stories (five on the front page) and 550 column inches about the crime in the first six weeks after his abduction; *New York Times* coverage was initially even more extensive, over ninety column inches in the first week. Catholic missionary Felipe Balán Tomás has been missing in Guatemala for eight months now, but not one column inch in the *Post* or *New York Times* has been devoted to any of the circumstances surrounding his abduction while saying Mass in February 1985.

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heavily armed gunmen. Relatives provided authorities with the abductors' license-plate numbers, but no arrests followed.

● As the New Year of 1985 broke, the well-informed British monthly *Latin American Regional Reports: Mexico/Central America* stated: "Hardly a day passes without a newspaper report of the assassination of a student, university lecturer, or union leader. In rural areas a wave of abductions also has been reported."

● On January 8, 1985, government security forces occupied the U.S.C. Services Division offices burning files and threatening workers.

● On January 4, 1985, U.S.C. Medical School Dean Mario René Moreno Cambara denounced an incendiary bombing of his school which, apparently, had been done to show displeasure over a third-year-medical-students' strike (over unpaid back wages) that had begun the preceding day.

● On January 27, 1985, U.S.C. psychology professor Mayra Janeth Meza Soberanis was found dead with her throat slit. Earlier, in September 1983, Prof. Meza had been abducted and released.

● On February 19, 1985, three thousand U.S.C. students began to demonstrate for constitutional protections for the university at the National Constituent Assembly, the body elected during 1984's violence to write a new constitution to take effect in 1986. Demonstrations ended when 5 percent of the national budget for U.S.C. was promised; the final draft released later, however, granted U.S.C. only 1 percent of the budget.

● In late February 1985, large numbers of plainclothes security forces entered U.S.C., and agriculture student Luis Factor Ozaeta Chavez was wounded by gunfire on February 20.

● On March 2, 1985, two university students (Joaquín Rodas and Rafael Galindo) were abducted in the city of Quetzaltenango. Both had attended the February demonstrations in the capital. Law student Maria del Carmen Sanchez Tarrayo forcibly became "disappeared" in the capital the same day.

● On March 15, 1985, ruling Gen. Mejía stated that "to take steps toward the reappearance alive of the 'disappeared' is a subversive act and measures will be adopted to deal with it." Thereby, G.A.M. and campus human rights advocates were accused of being a "pressure group managed and directed by the subversion." Before the end of July, three G.A.M. leaders were murdered in separate assassinations. G.A.M. family members, including small children, were also murdered in these incidents.

● On March 24, 1985, architect Fabio José Quezada Zaldaña was machine-gunned to death. A Nicaraguan who had lived in Guatemala for many years, Quezada was connected with the U.S.C. Center for Regional Urban Studies, where formerly he had served as director.

● On March 27, 1985, Prof. Carlos Cabrera García, formerly candidate for Engineering Dean at U.S.C., was shot to death.

● On April 5, 1985, a U.S.C. students' festival turned into a large street demonstration against the government's persistent violation of human rights. Three days later, the corpse of an abducted U.S.C. law student was found floating in a reservoir.

● On April 11, 1985, Mariano Aparicio Esquetuazy, another U.S.C. law student, was violently "disappeared." On April 23, 1985, a nineteen-year-old woman (Violeta Ileana Peréz Sierra) was kidnapped as she left an evening school class. Six days later, U.S.C. medical student Augustín Pos Ibay was abducted also.

● On May 3, 1985, veterinary student Jorge Mario Alberto Sandoval was seized by armed men in the capital; he was released alive on May 27.

● On May 30, 1985, three extension workers for the (Catholic) Rafael Landivar University were abducted in the capital. Guatemalan Archbishop Prospero Penados del Barrio later accused "those persons who oppose the economic and social betterment of the indigenous peoples" (or Indians) of committing these kidnappings.

● On June 4, 1985, Prof. Edgar Enrique Leiva Santos, a member of U.S.C.'s Supreme Council, was shot dead by security forces on campus. Prof. Leiva had been nominated to become University Rector in 1986 and was shot near the spot where, in 1982, Rector Mario Dary Riveria fell to an assassin. Eleven days later, an agronomy student was kidnapped (Julio Cesár Flores Polanco).

● On June 21, 1985, the secretary of U.S.C.'s Economics Students' Association, Vladimir Armando Hernandez, was

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abducted by security forces even as Gen. Mejía was assuring a delegation from G.A.M. that his government held no "disappeared" persons. Within days, a U.S.C. law student (who was a legal aid volunteer), was abducted, the eighth such abduction in June 1985 alone. This rash of violence caused other student leaders and their families to seek asylum in the Venezuelan embassy. But violence didn't abate: Ambrosio Perez Guzman, an employee of the U.S.C. engineering school, also was killed (June 26), again by men arriving on campus in three official vehicles.

● On July 2, 1985, U.S.C. student Gloria Elvira Barrientos was abducted while conducting social services studies in Zunil, Quetzaltenango. Another student at U.S.C.'s Quetzaltenango campus, Edgar Florencio Cajas Martinez, was found tortured, shot, and dead several days after his mid-July abduction. On July 12, economist Juan René Conde Velarde, a professor at Rafael Landivar University, was killed. A social welfare teacher (and law student) and his wife were machine-gunned to death on the last day of the month. (The U.S. publication *Chronicle of Higher Education* on this same day claimed only three U.S.C. students and one U.S.C. professor had been kidnapped since May 1. The story noted no killings of university persons. Indeed.)

● On August 13, 1985, U.S.C. medical student Edgar Edmundo Minja Ardón was kidnapped by government security forces.

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● In the first week of September 1985, twelve were injured and five hundred arrested after U.S.C. students led mass urban demonstrations against increases in food and bus prices. The U.S.C. campus was occupied for three days by riot police and army troops. University officials have charged that $1.5 million in damages to facilities resulted.

IT MUST BE STRESSED that this grim chronicle is not comprehensive, in that repression against only one social sector, the university, has been enumerated. Total nation-wide casualties in all social sectors caused by guerrilla and counter-insurgent warfare, rightist terrorism, and security forces' violence certainly number several thousand in each year and at least fifty thousand dead over-all since 1978. The absence of prosecutions in over thirty-five thousand unresolved "disappearances" since 1966 tends to underline the continuing relevance of Amnesty International's 1981 charge that, in Guatemala, there existed a "government program of political murder."

The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, reauthorized by both houses of the U.S. Congress and signed by President Reagan in July 1985, bars United States assistance to any nation where a *pattern* of gross violation of internationally recognized human rights exists. The 1984 Kissinger Report found such a pattern in Guatemala, stating on page 100: "An even more serious obstacle in terms of the ultimate containment of armed revolt in Guatemala is the brutal behavior of the security forces. In the cities they have murdered those even suspected of dissent. . . ."

Any fair reading of the facts reported in this article must concede that these patterns in the Guatemalan system of human rights violations appear to endure. It strains credulity to claim blandly that an electoral campaign can be fairly conducted unperturbed by this cloud of intimidation.

Inexplicably, however, the Reagan administration would have us avoid any delay and set aside that needed, close examination. Less than six weeks after accepting congressional parameters on Guatemalan aid in July (i.e.: civilian government, military under control, an end to "disappearances"), why has the administration now proposed to rush $5 million to the Guatemalan police this fall? In the July 1985 negotiations over a foreign aid bill in a congressional conference committee, and by subsequent action by both full houses of Congress, the U.S. lawmakers specifically spurned administration efforts to grant even a nickel to the Guatemalan police. What conceivably can have changed?

Simply throwing money at Central America to "stop terrorism" has, in fact, become a more tempting option in Washington, especially since Salvadoran President José Napoleon Duarte's daughter was abducted in September. But it is the ship of American values that will be beached if Congress accedes and takes Guatemala off the list of proscribed nations ineligible to receive U.S. security assistance. The voices of the martyrs from San Carlos University never were heard here in life. For decency's sake, can they finally be heard in their deaths?

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From the council to the synod

HOW HAVE the promise of Vatican II and the actual changes in the American church since the council affected you? Can you pinpoint developments in your own faith and identity as a Catholic which resulted from the council and its aftermath? What are the most important shifts, positive or negative, that you have experienced? And what remains the most essential unfinished business still facing the Catholic church today?

Those were the questions that *Commonweal* posed to a group of individuals from a diversity of backgrounds and occupations, of different ages, holding a wide range of political views, and with very different personal histories in regard to the Catholicism that, nonetheless, all recognize as a force in their lives. With these strikingly varied expressions of personal experience and lay opinion, we complete the series of recent articles analyzing outstanding issues in the church as it approaches this November's extraordinary synod. THE EDITORS

Raymond Flynn

RAYMOND FLYNN *holds a Master's degree from Harvard University School of Education. He worked as a probation officer before entering politics. He was a member of the State legislature and the Boston City Council, and is now the mayor of Boston.*

IN THE TWENTY YEARS since the final session of the Second Vatican Council, we have seen two decades of progress in the life of the church as it relates to the entire human family. Those years have also marked a considerable period of growth for me as an individual. I became a husband and father, as well as a public servant.

I was twenty-three when Vatican II first convened. It was a time of uncertainty for nations and individuals alike. However, Vatican II demonstrated to all the willingness of the Catholic church to reach out to other faiths and deal with the issues of humankind in the modern world. It showed the church as an institution of great vitality, and as a young man trained by the Dominican priests at Providence College, I was proud to be a part of it.

I was raised in an Irish Catholic household by a mother and father who taught me that a deep faith in God was the most valuable thing my forebears brought with them from Ireland, where due to colonial misrule they knew economic and religious discrimination in their own country. Faith in God was one of the few things they had to bring with them to America, a possession which they and my parents clung to with pride and devotion. The church was at the core of our family life. Our daily activities, spiritual and social, often centered around our parish.

I continue to look back at that most important gift my

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parents ever gave me, the anchor of my upbringing — my faith — and to the church, the agent of that faith. And in Vatican II, I saw the church willing to examine itself and to assess its direction. The courage of church leaders inspired me, reinforcing the idea that my own relationship with Christ could grow.

Over time, following the example set by the participants of Vatican II, I looked within myself and then at the world around me. The aspect that had the most immediate and profound impact on me was that of *tolerance*. The largest, most representative council ever convened, Vatican II had the widest cross-section of nations, cultures, non-Catholic and lay observers.

As a student I had been greatly impressed at the sensitivity shown towards the rights of workers by the church in Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* — the great encyclical in which economic justice became a guiding light of church teaching at a time when other great institutions in the world were far less sympathetic. *Rerum Novarum* built upon Thomas Aquinas's message to us centuries before in his *Summa Theologica* about the responsibility of government and of those in positions of power to God's children on earth.

And then in the 1960s, under the fatherly guidance of Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council rekindled the essential truth behind these great teachings while openly facing the future and offering a bold new vision for the church in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Vatican II's commitment to tolerance and the church's restated commitment to respecting the dignity of every individual led to a greater understanding and acceptance of other faiths and cultures. For me, it underscored the need to treat every human being with dignity and respect, no matter what the color of a person's skin or the cut of her or his coat.

In the mid-1960s, as a probation officer assigned to the Superior Court system in Roxbury, I worked with young people from Boston's poorest communities. The church's teaching on tolerance guided me. It was this teaching, combined with daily experience in the city's neighborhoods, that taught me this most essential lesson: People have more in common with each other than they have issues dividing them.

The need for a good job, a decent home, enough food for our families, and quality education for our children, are basic to all of us. And just as importantly, I learned that if any of our fellow citizens suffers from the lash of injustice, economic or otherwise, we are all diminished.

Another important development of Vatican II was the church's willingness to look outside itself and embrace the world around it. Throughout the sixteen documents produced by the council are the common threads of the centrality of the family, the wrongness of discrimination, and the Christian's duty to help build a just and peaceful world. As Cardinal Suenens of Belgium urged at the end of Vatican II's first session, the council had to do more than examine the mystery of the church itself; it also had to attend to the church's relationship with the world at large.

This renewed mission of service to those in need demonstrated the wisdom and strength of the church. In a time of uncertainty and upheaval, it proved that it had more to offer than a doctrine of rhetoric. It was a call to action. This willingness of the church to take an active role in the events and issues that shape the quality of life for all people is an important example for all of us to follow.

The distinctive ecclesiology of Vatican II, based on service to those in need in addition to addressing articles of faith, has set the agenda for a viable institution, an active force in times of apathy. Last year's draft pastoral letter on economic justice released by the United States Catholic bishops is an example of the church's readiness to confront some of the most important issues facing us.

Additionally, the American bishops' letter shows that the basic tenets of the Second Vatican Council, handed down some twenty years ago, permeate the church's teachings today. The thrust of the letter suggests that our institutions must be used in the pursuit of economic and social justice. It clearly demonstrates that Vatican II's implicit call for action continues to be heard just as loudly today.

Mary Durkin

MARY DURKIN *is a pastoral theologian and author whose books include* Marital Intimacy: A Catholic Perspective; The Feast of Love: Pope John Paul II on Human Intimacy; *and (with Father Andrew M. Greeley)* A Church to Come Home To; How to Save the Church; *and* Angry Catholic Women.

IF IT WEREN'T for the Second Vatican Council, I would not be among those asked to give an opinion in this journal. The direction of my professional life over the last twenty years is directly attributable to the excitement generated while the council was still in session.

In 1960, before the beginning of Vatican II, I was a suburban housewife and the mother of three small children. Being a wife and mother was a full-time job. I never anticipated that there would be a time when my family would not need my constant attention. My husband and I were neophyte volunteer workers for the Cana Conference of Chicago. We had hoped to join the Christian Family Movement, but our pastor didn't believe in lay involvement (he even called the numbers at the Friday night Bingo); so Cana and the "liberal" atmosphere of many archdiocesan activities were the center of our religious life. Since our children were not yet of school age, we were relatively unaffected by our pastor. (We moved before they reached school age.)

Twenty-five years later, I am still a suburban housewife, but now I am the mother of seven young adult children, most of whom are finally finding their way out of the "nest." We have had no official involvement with the institutional church since we were board chaircouple for the Cana Conference the year *Humanae Vitae* was written. Again, we find that our geographical parish is not to our liking, but rather than move to another location, we simply have changed parishes. In addition, I now have a doctorate in theology, something I never

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> ***"There is a sense of freedom from meaningless rules, but there is also a deep desire to be 'inspired' by one's religion."***

would have considered possible prior to the council.

I began my theological studies in early 1965 before the closing of the council, "inspired" by Hans Küng's comment on the need for lay women theologians made during a lecture to Cana Conference workers in 1964. The advanced theological degree programs at the Catholic universities in Chicago only offered late afternoon and early evening courses geared to the convenience of the religious teachers in the Catholic schools, so I thought I would have to wait until my family was older.

But the council's spirit of ecumenism came to my rescue. Professor J. Cort Ryylarsdam, an Old Testament scholar at the University of Chicago, hearing of my interest in theological studies, convinced the Divinity School to admit me as a part-time day student, not because I was a woman (consciousness about women was not an issue then), but because I was a Catholic.

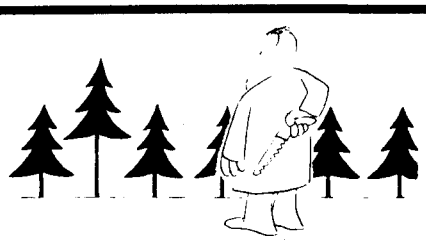
So, as the council ended, I was filled with hope about the laity's role in the church, about the possibility of some positive statement on birth control (in the five years we had participated in Cana, the "party line" on family size had switched to "responsible family planning" amid rumors of a possible change in the church's teaching on artificial contraceptives), about collegiality at all levels of the church, about ecumenism, and about my theological studies.

Taking one course a quarter, I obtained my doctorate in June 1974, the only one of my 1965 hopes, aside from ecumenism, to come to fruition. *Humanae Vitae* has destroyed the hope that the church would speak positively on human sexuality. Though there was much talk about collegiality, few people understood what it meant, and the hierarchical, clerical culture was not eager to give up its power. The new archbishop in Chicago, like many of his colleagues, did not believe in collegiality. In fact, he destroyed the "liberal" spirit of the archdiocese as he withheld funds from those progressive programs which had made Chicago famous.

In addition, by 1974 the women's movement should have made it easier for women in the church. Instead, the official church's stance on women then, and now, is anti-women, making it impossible for the church to play any leadership role in response to one of the most critical issues in modern society. And, as I was soon to discover when I went job hunting, it is not only church leaders who have problems with the "new woman." Priests, lay people (both women and men), and academics were, and many still are, skeptical about women as theologians. The official church's teaching on women serves to reinforce the anti-woman bias wherever it exists.

Thus, by 1974 I was less than optimistic about the survival of the spirit of Vatican II. I suspect the mid-seventies were the low point in church renewal. In 1985, many of the "issues" of the early post-Vatican II years are no longer of interest to most laity and lower clergy. Catholics are much less concerned about the official church and much more concerned about how their faith sheds light on the problems of their lives and in their world. There is a sense of freedom from meaningless rules, but there is also a deep desire to be "inspired" by one's religion. People are no longer motivated to go to church on Sunday out of a fear they will go to hell. They go hoping that, despite the bad liturgies and poor homilies, they will find a sense of direction in the richness of Catholicism.

As a pastoral theologian, I am excited about the church of 1985, even with its shortcomings. I'm convinced that the Catholic heritage will survive even the most inept statement that might come from the forthcoming synod, and the even more inept reporting of it by the popular media. At this time in our history, the future of the church does not depend on synods, but rather on reflection on the relationship between the "mystery" of human experience and the exciting God found in the stories, symbols, and practices of a long and rich Catholic tradition, including, but not limited to, its creeds and doctrines. Church leaders need to begin to "listen" to the Spirit's presence in the lives of the believing faithful. The faithful need to "hear" the Good News speak to their experiences. Vatican II paved the way to our discovery that "religious" issues, not institutional and theological issues, must be addressed if the church is to be responsive to the world. We now face the exciting challenge of getting on with our study of the religious experience of our modern world.



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Jack Miles

JACK MILES *was on the staff of the Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science in Chicago. He has been an editor at* Doubleday *and the* University of California Press, *and is presently book editor of the* Los Angeles Times.

–Then, said Cranly, you do not intend to become a Protestant?

–I said that I had lost the faith, Stephen answered, but not that I had lost self-respect. What kind of liberation would that be to forsake an absurdity which is logical and coherent and to embrace one which is illogical and incoherent?

IN JUNE 1967, I went for a walk along the coast in Donegal with a cousin of mine, an older man who is a native speaker of Irish. He had a tale for every rock and pool, and a manner that was an uncanny mix of careful deference for the Jesuit seminarian I then was, and combative readiness for a tussle and a laugh.

"And why is your Vatican making our Catholic church like the Church of Ireland?" he asked. I mumbled something about *aggiornamento*; but thirteen years later, when I married, it was in an Episcopalian church in Malibu. My cousin had been more nearly right about what was happening to us in the Catholic church than I had been.

There were special circumstances in 1980. My wife, raised a Lutheran, had been married before to a Catholic and at a nuptial Mass. I hadn't the stomach to seek an annulment on her behalf or otherwise have our decision scrutinized by the Los Angeles chancery office. But this was not our first step toward the Episcopalian church. In 1950, a Catholic wedding — like Catholic practice as a whole — was worlds away from its Episcopalian counterpart. In 1980, the two seemed to belong to the same world. The borders between them had become blurred. Border-crossing was not the dangerous business it had once been. One could, in fact, cross back and forth repeatedly, like an American citizen living in Tijuana, or a Mexican living in San Diego.

What lay ahead of me back in 1967 was a three-year sojourn at Harvard University, then as now a culturally Protestant institution. The council-inspired changes I saw in the Catholic community of Cambridge, Massachusetts, would strike me (for all the poverty of my knowledge of church history) as the tardy arrival of the Protestant Reformation in the Catholic church. I would be left with the once unthinkable notion that the future of the Catholic church — the Barque of Peter, the Mystical Body of Christ — was the future of a denomination. A decade later, I enacted a bit of what I then foresaw.

Charles Davis became an Episcopalian while I was at Harvard. His defense of his move, as I recall, was that — partly because of the conciliar reforms — nothing except papal authority remained so distinctive of Roman Catholicism that you could not get it elsewhere in the Christian world. Sacraments, spirituality, theology, asceticism, even celibacy — everything could be had under other auspices, most notably, for an Englishman like himself, under those of the Church of England. Davis seemed to me to have the best of every exchange. He wasn't exciting, he was just irrefutable.

Charles Davis had not claimed that it was necessary to leave the Catholic church, only that it was not necessary to stay in it. If I was imitating anyone as I edged toward Episcopalianism, it was not Davis but rather John Cogley, a theologian among journalists and a journalist among theologians. In a brief statement published in the *New York Times*, in the late 1970s, Cogley said that he had not so much converted to Episcopalianism as discovered that the positions he had slowly come round to were positions Episcopalianism had held all along. I wanted to hear more. I would find a way to visit him in California. His unexpected death left me with a keen and specific sense of loss.

In 1978 I had left the Society of Jesus, and the word "lapsed" captures well the quality of my religious practice. Of the ten years that followed, I spent four teaching at Loyola University of Chicago and two as an editor in the Catholic publishing program at Doubleday. Most of my associates in these places were Catholics, and my ties to them were the stronger part of my ties to the church. By the end of the 1970s, however, I had moved to Los Angeles, not a stronghold of Catholicism, and taken a job at the University of California Press in which none of my close associates was Catholic and religion as a whole was just one segment of a diversified publishing program. When I met my future wife in 1979 and we started attending St. Aidan's Episcopal church in Malibu, there were few human ties to the Catholic church left for the breaking. Having been a very Protestant sort of Catholic, I now became — in her company — a very Catholic sort of Protestant, and this is what I have remained.

> ***"One of the Curia's more ironic victories is the disappearance of so many Catholics of my own generation, reformers who once rallied against Romanità."***

As its detractors have never hesitated to point out, Vatican II, as a "pastoral" council, addressed none of the most difficult questions of belief in a culture of unbelief. Much of my own religious story, were I to tell it in full, would involve just those questions that the council slighted.

And yet the council has had a genuine impact on me. It was much easier for the average pre-conciliar Irish Catholic to think of becoming an atheist, a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Jew, a Russian Orthodox Catholic — anything but an American Protestant. I once felt that way too — Stephen Daedalus with a soul like a smithy. But this doughty old feeling has become al-

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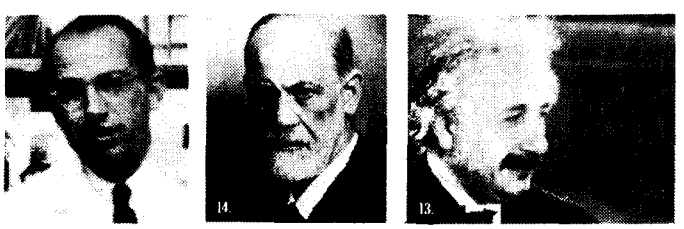

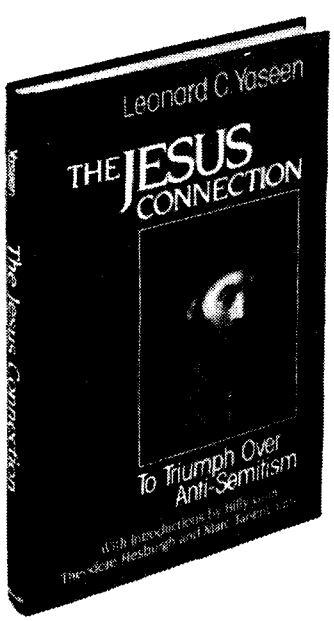

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legiance to a memory, and it is the council that has made it so. Some Catholics are nostalgic for the old theological rigidities, even after — or especially after — they have rejected them. As for practice, one of the Curia's more ironic victories is the disappearance of so many Catholics of my own generation, reformers who once rallied against Romanità, into a classic Mediterranean "hatched-matched-and-dispatched" relationship with Rome. I seem to have retained enough of my novitiate earnestness to want a little more than that.

But a little more proves to be enough. Episcopalianism has in me a lax practitioner and as fitful a thinker as Catholicism did. Within the Society of Jesus, I never made it to the theologate, and so I never really read Aquinas. I have kept my honor bright since 1980 by not reading Hooker, the Anglican Aquinas. Unstrenuous though it may be, however, Episcopalianism is not the path of least resistance for me or for anyone. The path of least resistance, friends, is the Sunday paper, financial planning, trips to Europe, jogging.

It was reconciliation with the Eastern Orthodox — a big yawn at the time for most American Catholics — that John had most in mind as he called the council. But was it such a yawn? Or did the council perhaps begin from the same sort of observation on the part of the younger Roncalli that later would move Charles Davis; namely, that most of the Christian churches have preserved most of the Christian patrimony? A blurring of the borders and a diminution of the gravity of border-crossings could then have been precisely what the benign, sagacious old pontifex had in prospect. The Sabbath was made for man, as our founder once put it, not man for the Sabbath. From a new tolerance for apparently minor organizational adjustments, much can begin, and not least in Donegal.

Peter Quinn

PETER QUINN *attended Manhattan College, was a VISTA volunteer in Kansas City, taught in a Catholic high school, received a graduate degree in Irish history from Fordham, taught history at Manhattan College, became a speech writer for Hugh Carey and Mario Cuomo, and is now an assistant to the president of* Time *Incorporated.*

WE WERE LINKS in an unbroken tradition. Brother Thomas, the principal, told us that on the first day of high school, in the early 1960s. For centuries students had sat in desks like ours, we were told, straight rows of obedient boys, soldierly and orderly, in institutions like this one, the boot camps of the Church Militant. Everything would be compulsory: jackets, ties, short hair, silence in the hallways, retreats, confession, rosary beads, the courses we took, the color of our book covers. It had been so for our fathers, and if we weren't blessed with a vocation to the priesthood, it would be so for our sons.

Brother Patrick reiterated it all to us in the only religion class I remember him teaching on the coming council, the gathering of the Church Fathers in Rome that would reaffirm the ancient, unalterable rituals and dogmas of Roman Catholicism. Nothing would change. It was as permanent and concrete as the New York neighborhoods we came from, solid facades of brick, stolid, safe, secure places that would always be as they were then, *per omnia saecula saeculorum*.

The changes came slowly at first. Those of us who were altar boys were most immediately affected. Gradually, our responses to the prayers of the celebrant were cut back, anglicized, turned over to a reticent congregation that spoke with far less clarity or enthusiasm than we who prided ourselves on articulating a Latin we barely understood.

> ***"I have no nostalgia for the old order. . . This pilgrim church, trying to reconcile change and tradition, timeless truth with the vagaries of human metaphor, is my home."***

One change followed another. But the intellectual ferment of the council — the debate over religious liberty, the nature of the church, the responsibility of the laity — passed us by. In Catholic high school and college during the council, I remember almost no discussion of the arguments raging in Rome. What I do remember is eating meat on Friday for the first time, the old ban lifted, a delicious sense of committing an unmortalized sin. What I do remember are the dress regulations at college being dropped, the mandatory retreats ended, compulsory courses in the history of Catholic theology giving way to electives in Buddhism or the ethics of social commitment.

One by one most of the friends who had gone away to be priests or brothers came home. A growing number of our teachers left the order, and soon you might run into them on the street or subway, men whom you were used to seeing in black robes with stiff white bibs in the shape of the Ten Commandments now in suits or dungarees, some of them pushing baby carriages.

At the same time as Pope John opened the windows of the church, the flying buttresses that had supported and reinforced our Catholicism swayed and shook. The old neighborhoods, the political machines, the immigrant identity all seemed to crumble together. The world was starting over again, with our generation, with the anti-war movement, with the civil rights struggle, with the sexual revolution. We were free, at last, of petty strictures and inane regulations, of narrow uniformity, of ethnic clannishness, of tradition and sin and guilt, of our Catholic immigrant past.

Free to start over, I left the Bronx and joined VISTA, taught in a settlement house in Kansas City, mingled with people from all over America, young men and women right out of college, fired with the same enthusiasms, certain that with the right technology, with the right amount of innocent good will

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and determination, or with a wisdom found only in the pre-industrial Orient, we could remake the world.

And gradually, hesitantly at first, I found myself circling back to the Catholic tradition I had been nurtured in. Not to the cocoon of unquestioning orthodoxy — ethnic as well as religious — but to the wisdom Catholicism has always contained: the sense of human frailty and imperfectibility, the rituals of penance and communion, the shared struggle across the centuries of frail, flawed, sinful human beings to touch the mystery of God's love, to embody it, to live it, to be saved by it.

The church I returned to had changed. It no longer claimed immutability as proof of its divine mandate. It tried to see God's grace working among other peoples and other faiths. It searched the modern world for signs of God's presence, reaffirming its catholicity, its willingness to seek new ways to express ancient truths, to renew the promise of Pentecost.

This post-conciliar church is more disorderly than the organization I was raised in. Nuns speak their minds, even to the pope. The laity seems more questioning, sometimes even querulous. The altar boys are now bit players in the Mass, and some of them are girls. But it is a church infinitely more alive and spirited, a company of pilgrims who are Catholic by choice; Catholic in the face of a culture that neither supports nor understands our faith; Catholic by commitment, sometimes perplexed, angry, unsure, but certain salvation is in the breaking of the bread.

I have no nostalgia for the old order, the safe but stultifying fortress I knew as a child. This pilgrim church, trying to reconcile change and tradition, timeless truth and the vagaries of human metaphor, is my home. It is a ramshackle place where the roof may occasionally leak, and the walls may be cracked, and the people upstairs are sometimes overbearing, but it is home nonetheless, the context of my life.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

BARBARA GRIZZUTI HARRISON's *books include* Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah's Witnesses, Off-Center, *a collection of essays, and a novel,* Foreign Bodies *(Doubleday).*

I MISSED Vatican II. I was baptized in the church but I was raised as a Jehovah's Witness and did not become a practicing Catholic until many, many years after the event. (I sometimes think that baptism is a kind of spiritual "vaccination to which I had a delayed reaction.) I wasn't paying much attention—I was living in India at the time and having babies and putting lots of flowers in lots of vases and studying Hinduism—so Vatican II went over my otherwise-occupied head.

I miss Vatican II even more in retrospect: I miss not having been part of the Before and After. When I was a kid, I was indoctrinated with the usual cultists' mischievous nonsense—the church was the Scarlet Whore of Babylon; there were tunnels connecting monasteries to convents for you-know-what. That kind of thing. When I sprang myself from the sect (or, to give credit where credit is due, and to give me the benefit of the doubt, when God sprang me), I thought of the church (when I thought of it at all) as the place where sexual repression and/or sexual titillation took place via the confessional. (This is the patent-leather-shoes, nuns-whack-school-kids syndrome dear to the heart of a certain kind of "Play the Enlightenment for Me Again Sam" liberal.) I never perceived the church as a vehicle for social change. When I became a writer and started going to literary parties (something I don't do much anymore), I met only lapsed Catholics, who told boozy lapsed Catholic stories.

When I began to take religious instruction (for reasons which I have written about elsewhere), what bowled me over was the incredible liberality that permeated the proceedings. Although I did not hand-pick the religious instructor—I walked off the street into Saint Patrick's one day, and the guy on duty took me on—I felt as if I were going to a progressive school. I thought it was terrific. Now I'm not so sure. Just as I now wish I'd sent my children to a traditional school where teachers taught Latin and were inclined toward a little healthy repression instead of teaching all about the Black Panthers and all about how to be happy — a futile enterprise — I wish that my instructor, and every post-Vatican II Catholic I encountered at that time, would have been less liberal with me. Did I have to raise my kids Catholic in order to be a communicant? The answer was No. Did I have to forgo sex (I was by this time divorced)? "It's-Not-the-Act-but-the-full-context-and-consequences-of-the-Act"... in other words, No. What about birth control? "It doesn't exist as an issue in the American church." Might I still believe in a woman's right to what I then called "reproductive freedom"? The answer was Yes. (I am now more conservative than my instructor, on this issue at least.)

> ***"I wonder if I might not have been a better Christian . . . if I'd had to go through the Before and After process."***

This liberality, of course, stemmed from Vatican II. I wish someone had been sterner with me. The reason I wish this is that what I once regarded as my great good luck—coming into the church at a time of opening and loosening—is now a source of pain and bewilderment to me. I know this sounds perverse. I don't mean that I've developed an Evelyn Waugh consciousness and wish to return to a pre-Vatican II rigidity; not at all. What causes me pain is this: What right did I have to luck out (if luck is the word?) when I see other men and women—particularly women—in pain over the very issues that I was granted such latitude on (birth control, for example). When I hear the bitterness of those we are now obliged to call our separated brothers and sisters, I think, "Why me? Why was it made so easy for me? Should it have been? My struggles were so minimal. Everything accrued to me—I gave up so little and

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what I gave up I didn't want anyway. Others suffered and changed and rejoiced as a result of Vatican II or gave up before Vatican II . . . . And I wonder if I might not have been a better Christian—I'm not a very good one—if I'd had to go through the Before and After process.

I don't know how I earned my privilege, if privilege it is. There are times I wish for more boundaries, simply put, more rules. For me, that is. It has been suggested to me that my obligations, as a post-Vatican II Catholic, are great: I have to rely on my conscience. Well, I don't trust my conscience. This says more about me than it says about Vatican II.

I know God calls one when He is good and ready. But I'm still trying to understand why the call—and my answer — was so timed. Well, maybe God knew I'd almost been killed by the Witnesses' rules. On the other hand, maybe I have a pathological need for rules because of my experience with the Witnesses. In either or any case, I'd like to have known my church before Vatican II, for better or for worse.

I've just, not so incidentally, come from spending six months in Italy. It's interesting to me that Vatican II has less apparent effect among the faithful in that country than it does here. And it is also interesting to me that I am happier in Italy than I am here.

J. Peter Grace

J. PETER GRACE *is chairman and chief executive officer of W. R. Grace & Co., in New York. He headed the President's Private Sector on Cost Control and was a member of the Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy which issued a letter in response to the bishops' pastoral, entitled, "Toward the Future: Catholic Social Thought and the U.S. Economy."*

THE RESPONSE of a layman to the question of how he has been affected by changes in the American church in the twenty years since Vatican II will necessarily be colored by his own experience with the Catholic faith from childhood to the present and by his current position. My response, therefore, is that of a practicing Catholic for seventy some years, of a father of nine children and fourteen grandchildren, and of a "busy" business executive.

My response is based on "recollections of early childhood," remembrances of days past, contact with other people, religious and lay, and observations of the current scene, social, economic, and political.

First, in my assessment of changes since Vatican II, I would affirm several aspects very positively:

- The use of the vernacular in the liturgy, particularly in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This change has permitted the individual to participate in the reading and responses in a meaningful way. No Latin scholar, I applaud the use of English. I have observed, too, the enthusiastic participation of congregations attending Masses being said in their native tongues, Spanish, French, etc.
- A clearer understanding of the tenets of the Catholic church through openness in discussion, through published expositions, explications, and dialogue.
- The opening up of the Roman Catholic church to ecumenism, to ecumenical dialogue, I regard as a healthy aspect of American Catholicism. I can remember when a Catholic would hesitate to attend even a wedding or funeral service conducted by a rabbi or a Protestant clergyman. Thank God those days are gone.
- A greater emphasis on God as a loving, forgiving father, if not a direct result of the council, seems to me is enhanced by movements that were an outgrowth of the council: the Charismatic Movement, the Renew program, the resurgence of devotion to the Blessed Mother, evidenced by renewed participation in Father Patrick Peyton's Family Rosary, the scriptural rosary, etc.
- Opening up to successful business leaders avenues through which they can serve the poor and underprivileged by their active involvement with caring groups. I would mention here Father Bruce Ritter's Covenant House, which serves as a refuge for so many lost, hurting, young street people; the Amerishares Program, founded by a successful businessman, Bob Macauley, which sends tens of millions of dollars of food and medicine to starving people in Central and South America and in the war-torn areas of Lebanon and Africa, without regard to the religious beliefs of the recipients; and the Share program, founded by Carl Shelton, a deacon in the San Diego diocese, which is providing food at minimal cost in exchange for service to the poor. This program, founded in the San Diego diocese, has spread to Mexico, Chicago, New York, and areas around Washington, D.C.

As a businessman, I am filled with admiration for the technological and scientific advances of the century and, indeed, of the last twenty years. I am fascinated by my office computers turning out columns of figures in minutes. I am delighted to be able to fly from New York to Darwin to Singapore to Brussels and home again in days. Yet, I profess that I am disturbed by many of the changes in attitudes and mores in our present day society. I decry these evidences of a breakdown in the social, moral, and religious fiber of American life: permissive attitudes about premarital sex, increasing divorce rate, blatant immorality in the entertainment and media fields, pregnant teenagers, increasing spread of pornography, abhorrent lifestyles, increasing dishonesty in all forms from cheating on income taxes to the sharp rise in petty theft and shoplifting. Only the most extreme would blame these changes in our society on the Vatican council, even in part. But to combat these evils should be high on the church's agenda of unfinished business. In other words, what is needed is a renewal of the mission of the church — a mission which Vatican II has already inspired, but which needs to be intensified using every resource possible within the church, especially the close cooperation of clergy and laity and the genuine use of their particular expertise. The church cannot fix all the problems in the world, but she can provide help and guidance to her children to live in a world beset by these problems.

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I would respectfully suggest that the areas the church should concentrate on might be:

Education — To educate our children in the tenets of the faith into which they were baptized; the Ten Commandments, the commandments of the church, the sacraments, the rosary, and so forth. All of these are part of the heritage of the Roman Catholic church and should not be denied to our children who need them today to maintain their moral balance in a world so devoid of absolutes.

Christian Family — The Christian family of today needs to be encouraged and supported by the church through realistic, pastorally sound solutions to the many practical problems facing families. Emphasis should be on the need for mutual charity and unselfishness between spouses and for their children, and a generous and loving attitude towards the world around them.

Vocations — The problem of declining vocations is a serious one for the church and is one which should be looked at by the laity and the clergy in order to get an idea of religious life which is different, perhaps, but as effective as the older model which may have been too rigorous and remote. The priest and religious for the post-Vatican II world need freedom from archaic rules, not to make their lives easier, but in order that they might be able to be the type of religious that the church, the lay people, and the world need — totally committed ambassadors of Christ, special witnesses to the world of the love which God has for each one of us. Vocations will come when priests and religious themselves truly understand the gift of love they are for this loveless world. The growth of Mother Teresa's order is just the normal reaction of dedicated young Christians to a call from God that is clear and compelling.

> ***"I can remember when a Catholic would hestitate to attend even a wedding or funeral service conducted by a rabbi or a Protestant clergyman."***

Evangelism — Lastly, an area which needs the attention of the church is the enormous challenge to bring the message of Christ to the world in a more effective way. We need to sell our product more effectively. Every means should be used to meet this challenge, especially an organized and cooperative effort to make better use of television and the media. Scattered and sporadic efforts are not very effective. People like Mother Angelica, who has accomplished so much single-handedly, should be encouraged and helped by the hierarchy. And lastly, I would suggest the focusing of religious and lay missionaries on renewed efforts to bring the Good News of the Gospel to the spiritually hungry they serve, with a concomitant wariness about becoming involved in political and economic affairs.

Tom Fox

TOM FOX, *a graduate of Stanford, earned a Master's degree in Southeast Asian studies after serving with the International Voluntary Services in Vietnam. He returned to Vietnam in 1970, reporting for* Commonweal, *the* National Catholic Reporter, *and other journals. He was a reporter on the* Detroit Free Press *and an editor at the* Washington Star. *Since 1980 he has been the editor of the* National Catholic Reporter.

AT FORTY-ONE, my life straddles neatly the pre- and post-conciliar church. One day my type will be considered a rare breed, Catholics who lived through an epic turning point. I came of age in 1965, at the dawn of Roman Catholicism's new age. I took on the new age with all the spirit and enthusiasm of a young man entering the world for the first time. I wanted quick and sweeping changes, but these desires were somehow tempered by the consolation that I had a lifetime to see them through.

Twenty years later, I sense I may be cheated from these hopes, but again feel consoled that a good number of us, recognizing ourselves as fully church, forge on ahead. Looking back to that turning point, I see now the transition for me from old church to new could not have been more natural — or exciting.

A personal assessment of the extraordinary synod requires perspective — and a confession of sorts. Let me start with the confession: I love the Roman Catholic church, recognize its essentially unchanging character, have willingly embraced it in both pre-conciliar and post-conciliar forms — although my love, never untroubled, has been made much easier to cultivate as a result of the council. I feel a need to embrace church traditions (and the freedom to cast some aside). I am attracted to the church's sacramental mysteries, am slowly discovering the Scriptures, and am frequently awed by the Eucharist. Each of these elements of church offers hope, strength, courage, and guidance. Properly recognized, each empowers us as we reach out to one another and our Creator. So you might say, I am hooked. I have studied and flirted with other paths, but have never strayed far. I can no longer imagine leaving the Catholic church. It simply has too many arms. I would have no place to hide.

I often consider myself a traveler. At mid-life the journey appears much shorter now. Like many others, I spend considerable time trying to figure out how best to fit in, how to be of service while on the move. I have heard some call us pilgrims, and others nomads. Whatever, I believe we are God's people, the Creator's children. This clarifies my responsibilities and provides life's meaning.

It is with my wife and three children I feel most called to participate. After that, I look about and see much work to be done. A journalist by profession, I help to record the path we are on, including our failings and successes. But it is always the selfless acts which I find most interesting. When I spot

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them I explore them. They may serve to encourage others to follow suit.

Where are we headed? To understand we must know where we are: we need to identify ourselves. We call ourselves U.S. Catholics; or better, Catholics living in the United States. We are conditioned by a culture of excessive individualism which has isolated our vision. We are further conditioned in a way only the most hardened among us could fail to see. Our nation worships false gods, among them the nuclear genies. Many of us recognize our most common sins, among them sins of racism, materialism, and complacency. We sit at bountiful tables and, looking across, stare at stark hunger throughout the world. Injustices abound, even within our own church. But we are learning, witnessing for faith — and we will not go away. We are on the move, if not always together, attempting in many ways to build the Kingdom.

We gather in parishes and, increasingly, in other smaller Christian groups, searching out stronger bonds. My family is part of at least two of these new communities. The emergence of these groups is a real sign of hope. For myself, I search out voices of wisdom, following those who have extended their lives to the poor and needy. I keep a close eye on those who risk discomforts out of Christian concern. They have listened and know where they are headed.

Looking back along the road, I see how we have changed. In the old church we looked to others to tell us right and wrong. Now we still listen, but weigh official teachings against our own experiences. It can get burdensome, is never neat, but the alternative no longer remains an option. Their words and our experiences have not always matched, especially, as we well know, in the area of human sexuality.

Personally, I also think of the insights which come from raising two daughters and a son. My older daughter, eleven, is already asking about her place within the institutional church. The process starts simply enough; she has a brother, twelve. "Why can Daniel . . . ?" she asks. My answers are inadequate. Are my children to face unnecessary barriers? And as a result go their own ways? The priority of conscience: a distinctly post-conciliar insight. Developing it in good faith can cause unrest, but peace of mind as well. It stems from knowing that no one — save self — can cut me off from the church, from the common journey.

But to set the record straight, I need to consider my many debts to our church's formal structures: they helped form the piety and faith of my Polish mother, the wisdom of my father, a scientist, who viewed his profession as an act of love, the mapping out of God's divine mystery. They molded my formal Catholic education during which I was passed from prayerful, selfless nuns to eager and educated Jesuits, and through a host of other religious who ushered me along the way. And how could I have met my wife, a Catholic convert in a faraway land, were it not for this Eucharistic network we call church? At the center are values of love and reconciliation, the search for justice and peace, notions of human family and personal dignity, the good news of God's unending concern. It is all of this I wish to pass to our children, as it has been passed to me through the church, old and new.

So much for perspective. The extraordinary synod? An opportunity to solidify a pastoral vision of church, and a notion of faith, not simply as knowledge, but as an entire way of life. And if the opportunity is lost or misused? We will continue on the journey. There's no going back. Simple as that.

Wilfrid Sheed

WILFRID SHEED *was* Commonweal*'s drama critic and book editor, 1964-66. His books include* The Hack, People Will Always Be Kind, Max Jamison, Transatlantic Blues, *a biography of Clare Boothe Luce, and a forthcoming portrait of his parents, Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward. His essays have been collected in* The Good Word and Other Words.

AS THE ONLY SON of a publishing house — and how many of you readers can make that statement? — that rose and subsequently fell on the crest of the council, I at first tended to think of Vatican II as primarily a publishing event. To put the matter briefly: before Vatican II it took guts to publish Hans Küng; afterwards it took even more guts to lose him to Doubleday. In all our striving and conniving for liberation, it had never dawned on us that the first to be liberated would be our own authors.

The fifties are as hard to describe to one's grandchildren — or rather the grandchildren one would have had if times hadn't changed — as the Age of Modesty is. There was a general sense back then of liberals milling about the Bastille without any real hope of getting in. It is no mean task to conduct a revolution under the *imprimatur* system, and one recalls with wonderment the quaint ruses we and our rivals went through to get our books printed in friendly dioceses. Authors could burrow just so far into a fresh line of thought before running into Big Papa frowning at the end of the tunnel.

> ***"Before Vatican II it took guts to publish Hans Küng; afterwards it took even more guts to lose him to Doubleday."***

I won't say that when we did get into the Bastille we found nothing there; but as specifically Catholic publishers, we might as well have. After the first flush of triumph, as the Jacobins pounded each other's backs and waved at the crowd, enjoying their own forms of triumphalism, we found that our new freedom could not be cashed in for very much or for very long. It turned out that the right to publish the latest avant-garde theology was not the pearl beyond price we had thought it, in 1970s America, and one could only crank out so many books about ecumenism and the joys of pluralism. The freedom to publish absolutely anything we felt like in Sanskrit could hardly have done less.

However, I have since been informed that Vatican II was not

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exclusively about publishing. In this somewhat larger context, there were always two ways of looking at it that I found equally persuasive. One (predominantly European) was that the revolution had already happened, and that without at least this much ratification, intellectually honest people would have had no choice but to leave. The other was that the council was a panicky, quasi-Episcopalian grab for the vanishing liberals who, having got what they wanted, left anyway.

Since the Holy Ghost is understood to be the tie-breaker in these matters (what shall we call him, the Catch 3?), I cast a shaky vote for the former. "Cultural Catholics" may seem like a pretty drab outcome to such a mighty convulsion, but it is my experience that CCs at least are not tempted to leave the church any further than they have, but tend to hang around in the shadows near the door. Perhaps they can deal from there. Without the council they would be gone forever.

Mary Gordon

MARY GORDON's *first two novels,* Final Payments, *and* The Company of Women, *received the University of Rochester's Kafka Award.* Final Payments *also was a Book Critics' Circle Award nominee. Her most recent novel is* Men and Angels *(Random House). She has also published short stories, poetry, and criticism.*

IT IS NOT, to my mind, a time for optimism. The excitement that I felt as a teenager, when Pope John said he was opening the windows, has vanished. This may be, in my personal history, merely the approach of middle age, but I don't think so. The promise of the council was a promise of genuine change; the tyrannies of the past — the mystifications (as opposed to the actual mysteries), the hierarchical insensitivities, the blindnesses to the realities of human life — these were to be overthrown. Things could, for the first time, be examined, not by some specialized office in the Vatican whose name, even, was incomprehensible, but by the ordinary layperson, without, perhaps, the intervention and translation of "Father." The church would remember that it was the church of the whole world, not just of Europe, or those who identified themselves with Europe and its view. The liturgy would be enlivened. Everything was possible.

But it is interesting to think now that from the beginning of the council and throughout to its end, issues of women were not real, and the maleness of the church was not thought of as a problem. In that women were vessels of reproduction, the question of birth control impinged upon them, but as spiritual and intellectual beings who had no voice, no representation — well, the concept simply didn't occur. Because this situation still largely exists, the changes that the council brought about must be seen as superficial. An institution that denies power and spiritual authority to over one-half of the world by virtue of gender must necessarily be cutting itself off from reality and truth. An institution run by male celibates must deny itself the best of its age. The presence of grace does not entirely disappear: the occasional treasure will find his way in. But he will find his way into a roomful of men half blind by prejudice.

As long as the church is run by male celibates, the promise of openness to life which the council represented remains a cruel lie. It is not enough for liberals in the church to congratulate themselves that they ignore or defy the hierarchy on the subject of birth control. What is at issue, what is not defied, what is, in fact, ignored, is the bias against women that quickly becomes a bias against sexuality as well. (I am never sure which way it goes: does a bias against women engender a bias against sexuality, or is it the other way around? I don't think it matters in the end.) The church's insensitivity to questions of divorce and homosexuality, its obsessional closedmindedness on the subject of abortion closes its doors to those who, living in the modern world, live with the complex realities of modern sexuality. The church, then, becomes the home only for celibate men or men married according to the church's limited definitions of permissibility. This leaves a lot of people out.

> ***"I am never sure which way it goes: does a bias against women engender a bias against sexuality, or is it the other way around?"***

I grieve, as well, that the liturgical reforms the council brought about left behind them an absence of that formal beauty that characterized the ancient liturgy, and replaced it with a desperate scrambling after the second-rate. Partly, this is a problem of the age. We are not living in a time in which the public arts flourish: music, spoken poetry, architecture, for example — those forms in which the religious genius has so fully expressed itself — are at a low point in their history. They have become in their "high" manifestations increasingly self-referential: important, therefore, to a limited audience.

Is the solution to admit that we live in an age when the forms that we need are not available, and humbly to go back to the poetry, music, and architecture of another time? It may be, but that solution is indeed dispiriting. And the tendency of the Right to grab Gregorian chant and Gothic architecture as the screen behind which it can hide its bigotry and hatred of the world makes me suspicious of that as an answer. The quality of the liturgy in the average parish must make the experience for almost everyone a source of pain and alienation, something which the saintly take on as a penance and endure, but which drives the less than saintly away. There may be exceptions in large cities, on the campuses of universities. But the average Catholic is denied the aesthetic riches of the church. The notion that formal beauty is somehow beside or even against the point, a notion that has characterized the wrongheaded populism of so many post-conciliar liturgists, leads one inevitably to the question: what, then, is the point?

The history of the papacy from the beginning of the council to the present is the outward and visible sign of the failure of

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the council's promises. At the beginning of the council we had on the throne of St. Peter a genius and a saint; now we have a celebrity.

Marilyn Chapin Massey

MARILYN CHAPIN MASSEY *is dean of the College of New Rochelle. She is the author of* Christ Unmasked: the Meaning of the Life of Jesus in German Politics, *and* The Feminine Soul: The Fate of an Ideal (Beacon Press, 1985).

A YEAR AGO I left a position at a research university to become the dean of an undergraduate school whose goal is to develop and integrate the intellectual, personal, and professional lives of women. When I was invited to reflect on how Vatican II had affected me, I realized that the ferment of the council during my own undergraduate years, more than anything else, had shaped the course and the integration of my own intellectual, personal, and professional life.

A moment in space and time, a gathering twenty years ago in Dr. Martin Marty's living room, captures that course. Dr. Marty had invited the first multitude of Catholics to come to the Divinity School at the University of Chicago to discuss with him the "why" of our historic appearance. That evening I met friends, intellectual colleagues, and, of all things, my spouse of now nearly two decades. For all of us, lay and religious alike, Vatican II had called us to become theologians and ecumenists at that famous and intellectually rich Protestant divinity school.

What I did not anticipate at that moment was how broad a path beyond the perimeters of the Catholicism of my youth my study of religion, undertaken in Chicago in the turbulent sixties, would open for me. For me, as for many others, the council's invitation to freely pursue the truth of our religion was one with its invitation to involvement in the world, which meant an active engagement in the movements for social justice and peace. In my case the unity of messages resulted in an untypically active career as a Ph.D. student and in the subsequent focus of my research and writing, not on Catholicism, but on the relation between religion and politics in the modern West. I did most of that research and writing as a Catholic woman on predominately Protestant, male, religion faculties at Duke University and Harvard Divinity School. After those wonderfully enriching years of what I see as the production of theory, I have, in a sense, come home, drawn by a subterranean stream flowing from the revelations of Vatican II, to be dean in a college with a strong Catholic heritage and an equally strong commitment to access in education. Now that I think about it, I realize that I am here because I still want to try to make real in the world, and not merely in books, the promise of liberation that broke open my world twenty years ago.

Yet during those years I have discovered a need for a kind of freedom that Vatican II did not explicitly herald. That, of course, is the need for the freeing of women, myself included, from roles and expectations that cripple our spirits and personalities. Along with the loss of naivetés which an intensive study of religion almost inevitably precipitates, this recognition makes it somewhat difficult to talk about a Catholic identity or seamless development of faith. It might be hard for me to conceive of it at all, if it had not been for my experiences inside Protestant scholarly and worship communities. There, for all the ambiguities being a Catholic woman presents, it is impossible not to be and feel Catholic. This came home to me at Harvard Divinity School, now itself peopled by multitudes of Catholics, when those Catholics responded so positively to my lectures on the history of Christianity. After years of honoring what I thought was an ecumenical and even a highly critical interpretation of that history vis-à-vis its political effects, I was surprised to learn that my students found my lectures shot through with themes and examples that to them were clearly Catholic. So I know that my Catholic identity is still there in my intellectual work, but as a scholar I have grown comfortable with its being implicit.

As a religious creature weaned on Vatican II, I am also most comfortable today with a more implicit than explicit identity as

> ***"I have discovered a need for a kind of freedom that Vatican II did not explicitly herald."***

a Catholic. This is due to the church's unfinished business with regard to women. It remains to be seen, in my opinion, whether the church can transcend a historical political structure from which women have been excluded and live up to the promise of Vatican II to affirm the full potential of humanity. The church faces the challenge of recovering and reaffirming the rich symbolism and ritual practice of what scholars have called the feminine, which abounded in its devotions to Mary, while affirming the equal humanity of women and men through internal political change. To do this, the heritage of Vatican II — which ushered in an ethical thinking which broadened the personal and private realm to encompass the social and political — must be sustained and enriched by hearing what women have to say.

Jean Vanier

JEAN VANIER *has devoted his life to caring for the wounded members of society, the handicapped, the elderly, prisoners, and the lonely. He founded l'Arche, a community for mentally-handicapped youths and adults in France. L'Arche communities have since been founded in many parts of the world.*

WHILE THE bishops were meeting, thinking, discussing, voting, and praying together during Vatican II, I was beginning the community of l'Arche. I was immersed in buying, cooking, dirtying, cleaning, resolving crises, to-

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gether with men who had a mental handicap. I was discovering the deep pain and suffering in the hearts of people with a handicap. I was learning that this pain came essentially from the experience of being a disappointment for their families, of not being appreciated in their parishes, of being devalued and rejected. They had no place within the body of the family, society, and the church.

As the months and years passed by, I began also to discover their incredibly deep insights into fundamental questions such as love and hate, guilt and forgiveness, death and resurrection. I began to see a great wisdom hidden in their hearts. However, that meant I had to take time to listen to them; I had to trust and appreciate them. For, it was only if I loved and trusted them sufficiently that they would be at ease enough to express themselves and thus help me to discover the presence of Jesus in them.

Vatican II was an incredible expression of life, an amazing manifestation of the Spirit of Jesus guiding his church. However, the seeds of Vatican II had been planted long before; they were in the hearts of many. Vatican II was a time of fruitfulness.

It was not a dogmatic council but a pastoral one, calling the church to hope, to take risks, to trust, and to have a greater belief in Jesus. It was a reminder that the church is not above all a human institution which can be governed by good discipline, clear definitions, and rigid laws, but rather it is the Body of Jesus, inspired and held together in a dynamic unity and guided by Jesus himself and his Holy Spirit.

As l'Arche was just beginning, I did not have much time to follow closely what was happening in Rome. However, I felt that a breath of fresh air was being given to the church. I felt confirmed in the vision of Christian community that I was called to live. At l'Arche, it was not primarily a question of fixing laws in order to be assured of good discipline (though, of course, good laws and discipline are necessary). It was more a question of loving and of listening, of trusting and of confirming; of recognizing the Spirit of Jesus living in the hearts of each one, especially in the hearts of the poorest and the weakest members of the community.

If trusting gives space for each one to act according to the light within him or her, it also gives space to act through darkness. It gives space also for people to be themselves, to vent their pain, and their anger. It permits beautiful things, but it also allows difficult and destructive things. Trust is the way Jesus treats us.

My experience in l'Arche shows me that trust calls forth that which is deepest and most beautiful in each person. I see Vatican II as the council of trust in a world that does not know the value of trust.

In l'Arche, I discovered that at times we need to be firm. Limits must be set to violence, deviant behavior, and the telling of half-truths. One cannot tolerate a person doing harm to another or scandalizing them (that is making them trip and fall). One cannot tolerate one person leading another into a world of illusion, confusion, and death. So, if the council was a council of trust, it did not in any way suppress authority which is always necessary; limits have to be set.

Jesus acted in the same way. He spoke harshly to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! Your thoughts are not the thoughts of God but the thoughts of men!" He spoke angrily to the Apostles: "Let the little children come unto me!" However, he led the way essentially by loving his disciples, washing their feet, creating community with them, and giving them a new model of authority.

Some people are discouraged by what has happened during

"The baby is still there and the bath water is still dirty!"

the twenty years following Vatican II. Someone once said to me sadly, fearful as he was of change: "They have thrown out the baby with the bath water!" No, the baby is still there and the bath water is still dirty!

Certain exterior attitudes in the church had to topple; change was necessary. There is always a period of confusion during and after a change in attitudes. Vatican II helps me personally a great deal. It calls me to the fundamental message of the Gospels. It invites me to look at Jesus, to let myself be called and loved by him, to follow him in the paths of poverty. It invites me to live as Jesus did and to trust. Jesus lived poorly. He was close to the poor. He ate with the publicans and sinners and was criticized for that. He invites me to live the beatitudes, to be meek and humble of heart like him, to be compassionate and forgiving.

Our world is a changing world. There are immense transformations in our societies coming from the inner brokenness of so many. People are being incited to individualism and to self-sufficiency, not to depend on anyone any more. People carry within them an immense amount of personal anguish and this anguish is frequently being channeled into hyperactivity, comforts of all sorts, or else it is being eased through distractions which excite dreams and encourage evasion. It is true the church can be invaded by the cultural values and fads of the moment. The Gospels and the church of Jesus are always in some ways counter-cultural. This invasion of culture inside the church is as old as the hills. So it is not surprising that strange ideas evolve inside the church, because people are people and are sinners and have difficulty believing in the folly of the Gospels.

But, above all, things are growing and evolving within the church because the church is the Body of Christ and the Spirit of Jesus is continually guiding it. More than ever before, the church is conscious of its separation from the state. It is counter-cultural; it is announcing more clearly its option for the poor. More and more people are discovering that the poor are the church; they are the heart and the center of the church. To welcome the poor in their brokenness is to welcome Jesus. To live with them is to live with Jesus. If we all live like Jesus, there is an immense hope for the world and all together we become the church.

Vatican II confirms all this: it calls for a church that listens

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before speaking, that loves and affirms before chastising. It sees the church as a body where each member, particularly the poorest, the weakest, and the most oppressed has a place, which, as Saint Paul says, should be a place of honor!

Eugene McCarthy

EUGENE McCARTHY, *a long-time contributor, is the former senator from Minnesota and presidential candiate in 1968. He is the author of, among others,* Ground Fog and Night, Gene McCarthys's Minnesota, *and* Complexities and Contraries: Essays of Mild Discontent *(Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, 1982).*

PRESIDENT KENNEDY visited Minnesota in early October of 1962, shortly before the opening of Vatican II. We attended Mass together at the cathedral in St. Paul. En route he questioned me as to why I was not carrying a missal. His brother Teddy, he said, "carried one he could hardly lift."

I was told by presidential aides that the priest who was to give the sermon when the president was in attendance at Mass had been asked, as was customary, to avoid controversial political issues, and even possibly controversial religious ones.

As it turned out, the preacher that day happened to be an auxiliary bishop. (The archbishop had already gone on to Rome.) The auxiliary spoke of the happy condition of the church, of its fortune to be having a council at which there were no great divisive issues. As the sermon went on, the president began to drum with his fingers on the railing. Eventually he leaned over to me and, referring to the church so pleasantly described, said, "If it is in such good shape, I don't think I would call a meeting."

At the time, I do not recall that I thought the church was in great trouble. I did believe that in many respects it was either unaware of the changes that were taking place in the world, or it was simply unresponsive.

Certainly, the political structures of the world had changed in the years following World War II. Institutional changes were taking place all across society. The speed and manner of communications were being recast dramatically. Communism was no longer merely a theory of political and social organization, to be challenged solely intellectually and morally. It was a political, historical reality, dominating major areas of the world and threatening to subordinate others. In the scientific world, major new advances were appearing with startling rapidity. Still, even in the church something was brewing. Even there one sensed hints of places where established dogmatic theology and moral teachings were being challenged. Clearly, the church was not quite in the happy condition it was judged to be by the auxiliary bishop of St. Paul. A meeting was in order and it was held.

The results have been less than fully satisfying. Possibly too much was expected. Possibly the great optimism and openness of John XXIII over-personalized the council. In any case, Vatican II remains unfinished business. Many, possibly most, of the questions and issues raised at the council remain unsettled. Few have been set aside.

I attended two sessions of the council, and was deeply impressed at the massed presence of the bishops and cardinals, as well as their support staffs — men and women, intelligent and dedicated to the church.

A host of what might be called non-dogmatic changes deserved attention: such things as liturgy in the vernacular, the conception of the priesthood and the sacraments, ecumenism. (Having grown up in rural Minnesota, I was used to a variety of languages: Latin and a smattering of Greek in the Mass, German for the rosary and for hymns, English for the stations of the cross and children's hymns. It was said of the parish that it sinned in English, confessed in German, and was absolved in Latin.) When it came to ecumenism, I was concerned with the acknowledgment of common beliefs and a rejection of irrelevant differences. I did not expect much movement in the church on moral issues such as birth control or abortion, which in the early sixties had not yet become political. I was a little taken aback when I learned punch-card voting was to be used. I had long opposed such devices in the United States Senate, arguing that issues on which the Senate voted demanded an open and personal commitment. I felt even more strongly about this when it came to matters on which I anticipated the council might act.

I do not think the special synod of bishops can turn back much of what has happened, reverse or turn aside some of the strong currents now running in the church, such as the changing concept of the priesthood, including the issue of the ordination of women. But I am hopeful that the synod, taking a lead from the American bishops, may endorse a "second coming" role for the church in which the Gospel will be preached "to the rich."

Juli Loesch

JULI LOESCH *was a founding member of the Pax Center, a Catholic peace and justice community in Erie, Pennsylvania, and is the founder of Prolifers for Survival (P.S.), an organization of women and men seeking alternatives to nuclear arms and abortion.*

I DON'T KNOW whether the human race will last another 500 years. But if we manage to avoid blowing ourselves away with the Bomb, poisoning ourselves with toxic effluents, or erasing our identities, line by line, with genetic engineering — that is to say, if there exist on this planet, 500 years from now, human beings who know they *are* human beings — those human beings may well consider that they almost didn't make it. And they may look back in history to ask themselves, "What was the single most important event which saved the human project on this planet — our human dignity — even, our human identity? What was the turning point?"

I suggest that the turning point will have been this: the

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publication, in the Year of Our Lord 1968, of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.

Well, *Humanae Vitae* wasn't any kind of turning point for *me* — certainly not at the time it was promulgated.

I graduated from the eighth grade in 1965, the closing year of Vatican II; and when *Humanae Vitae* came out, I was just entering my senior year of high school. If my grade school religious education featured a flashcard approach to doctrine, I must say that by my seventeenth birthday that deck had long since been tossed to the winds.

It was a hell of a year, anyhow, 1968. I was a single-issue fanatic against the war in Vietnam. I judged people (particularly *public* people) on this basis: are you opposed to the killing or are you not? There was the Tet Offensive in February of that year. Martin Luther King spoke out. King was murdered. Riots erupted. Bobby Kennedy triumphed in the California primary. Bobby was murdered. Allen Ginsberg celebrated the "Prague Spring" with flowers in his hair; then the Soviet tanks crushed all the flowers. Then there was the Democratic Convention Police Riot Extravaganza ("Welcome to Czechago") and I fell in love with Leo Tolstoy and the Jefferson Airplane and a young dissident named Thom who used to wear a long trailing scarf and looked just like Emmet Grogan. You know, the Digger. From San Francisco. And I went to dances and handed out leaflets against the draft.

All this sets the stage for the way I accepted (read: *didn't* accept) *Humanae Vitae* at the time. The war had destroyed all moral authority for us. What was there to believe in? Not "Our Country," which had already napalmed Vietnam, and which might nuke our sweet home planet into a smoking briquet. Not "Our Church," a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Warfare State, holding up the Gospel Book with death, like rings, on all its fingers.

Anyway, when *Humanae Vitae* came out, it wasn't hard to see which side I'd be on. I saw the charts that showed the growth rate of the human population shooting damn-near vertically right off the page; I noted the hemorrhoidal looks on the faces of the Vatican Curia; I read the comment of some smart dissident priestling to the effect that the new encyclical was "an intellectual embarrassment." (I liked smart dissidents.)

So when, early in the school year, Sr. Mary Claire Kennedy asked me what did *I* think of *Humanae Vitae*, I threw up my hands and pronounced in tones of exasperated common sense, "Aw, geez, Claire, if we don't have contraception, we'll end up with abortion." Contraception was supposed to prevent abortion. It was possible to believe that, when you were only seventeen, and it was 1968. "And besides," I opined solemnly, "*Humanae Vitae* is an *intellectual embarrassment*."

Being young, healthy, and heterosexual, and being, within the year, free of any adults with pretensions of governing me *in loco parentis*, I was soon in an excellent position to experience the personal and social benefits to be derived from sexuality liberated from fertility.

At first, I fared pretty well. My "partner" (as the family planning literature called him) was a genuinely good guy, and I was carefree and pharmacologically infertile.

I was vaguely uneasy that I was putting chemicals into my body every day that I'd hesitate to put into my compost pile. Then I read that women with my kind of medical history who were on the Pill could end up with a stroke.

I got off the Pill. I investigated other contraceptives. I drew a garish diagram of my inner waterways with all of the available barriers and plugs, jellies and jams, and state-of-the-art devices in place, and I was positively dismayed. Plastic domes, copper shards. "Head 'em off at the Fallopian tubes!" "Poison gas at the pass!" This wasn't Sexual Shalom — it was a cervical Strategic Defense Initiative.

Like Star Wars, a lot of capitalist creeps invested a lot of money in developing and promoting these things. And like Star Wars, you spent the money but you didn't end up being all that ever-lovin' *safe*. By 1972, the year before *Roe* v. *Wade*, about half of my female friends — at least, of those whom I knew well enough to know such an intimate thing — had had abortions. A miserable fate indeed.

> ***"The pope held up before our eyes the inviolability of the human design."***

So what was I to conclude? That females are a misbegotten breed? That our bodies are basically, finally, not in our own best interest?

No way. I still had a conservationist streak in me as regards my own waterways, which, more than any of the wild rivers of the world, have a right to be what they are: clean, that is, not spiked with toxic chemicals, not "doctored" or "altered" or "fixed." There are some things in this universe that are sacred. *Me*, for instance. And who agreed with me? Nobody agreed with me. Nobody but the church.

If every man, and every woman — fully human, fully alive, and *complete in every detail* — is made in the image and likeness of God, then we've got to protect and reverence what's natural and healthy. If we're sick or injured, we're to *restore* what's natural and healthy. That is therapy: restoring the natural.

Pope Paul VI asserted (actually *re*-asserted) that the human design is not arbitrary, but providential. In particular, our sexual design (with its pleasurability and its fertility and its bond-ability) is not sick. We don't need to be "cured" of it. Our sexual powers are O.K. They don't need to be "fixed."

If the Roman Pontiff had been a politician, he would have O.K.'ed contraception. Virtually every social, political, scientific, and religious institution on earth was for it. Any politician can tell which way the wind is blowing; and any religious charlatan can get the drift and call it the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit isn't just anything that's blowing in the wind. And Paul VI was not a politician.

In the face of incomprehension, scorn, and outright opposition on the part of — let's face it — nearly everybody, the pope held up before our eyes the inviolability of the human design.

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You can reorganize the government and restructure the university; you can retool the economy and redesign society. But human beings as such — in our minds, our souls, our bodies, ourselves — are not to be redesigned.

And this I hold to be decisive for the history of the human race. We must either perfect our wholeness, or repudiate it. If we repudiate it, there is little to prevent us from erasing ourselves finally, function by function, line by line. But if we perfect our wholeness, we will hold up before the eyes of the world the image and likeness of God.

Camille D'Arienzo

SISTER CAMILLE D'ARIENZO, R.S.M., *teaches in the radio and television department at Brooklyn College, co-authored, with Edgar Willis, a textbook,* Writing Scripts for Television, Radio, and Film *(Holt, Rinehart), and contributed a chapter in* Mid-Wives of the Future: American Sisters Tell Their Story *(Leaven Press, 1985). She has been the Catholic commentator for the past twelve years on WINS Radio in New York.*

"RELIGIOUS LIFE is not 'something,' but 'Someone.' " Sister Mary Mark McGann was responding to my first query into the meaning of a religious vocation.

"Someone" is at the heart of the longings of most teenagers. As a senior in an all girls' boarding school, my romantic involvements — real and imaginary — were confined to weekends and holidays, and monitored by one very protective father. It was 1950, a time for double dating, usually with young men who shared the values and morality presented by church and family. The ice cream parlor, dance floor, bowling alley, or beach afforded social environments for us. Sidesplitting laughter could erupt anywhere, and often did so in places requiring restraint.

Both my closest friend and closest cousin had decided to enter religious communities. I, unaware of their choices, had become increasingly attracted to the sacrifice, the physical trappings, and the goodness of the Sisters of Mercy who taught me. The missionary commitment of the Maryknoll Sisters appealed to my youthful idealism; however, concern for my father precluded the realization of that dream.

The essential magnet for me was Jesus Christ — the historical figure who commanded the New Testament; who loved, healed, comforted and challenged; who taught and touched and went about doing good. More than anything I'd ever felt, I wanted to know, love, and serve him.

Most of my friends understood. My relatives did not. Over their protests I gave away my wardrobe, sold my car, foreclosed my father's dreams of grandchildren, donned a postulant's garb and entered the novitiate. Six months later I was received in wedding gown and veil as a "Bride of Christ" as my father wept in the first pew. Paralleling the self-gift my marrying classmates gave their husbands, I would henceforth be docile, obedient, and faithful to Jesus through his church.

If the decade-and-a-half before Vatican II raised questions about the value of blind obedience, old wineskins, and spiritual maturity, still I learned that Sister Mary Mark had been right. Religious life was indeed Someone. It was also many things: habits, bells, silence, study, prayer, scrubbing and waxing marble floors. It was obeying rules without reasons or reason. It was pyramidal authority, and physical and psychological distancing from the very people the Lord said to "honor." It was professional preparedness, dedicated teaching, compassionate service. It was conforming to an image; it was laughter and loneliness, and social retardation.

A freer spirit lived on our library shelves. In the novitiate I discovered Caryll Houslander, eccentric, holy, artistic, mystic. Writing against the background of World War II, she portrayed war as the continuing Passion of Christ. Reacting in one passage to the aloofness of "religious" people, she observed: "It would be well if those seeking perfection ceased trying so painstakingly to learn how not to love and learnt instead how to love well." That line tugged, nagged, disquieted me.

Pope Paul VI revived that response in me at the time of the World's Fair in Flushing Meadows. His words were inscribed on the Vatican Pavilion: "Let the world know this: The church looks at the world with profound understanding, with sincere admiration, with an intention not of conquering it, but of serving it; not of destroying it, but of appreciating it; not of condemning it, but of strengthening and saving it."

How?

Cardinal Leo Josef Suenens suggested some answers in *The Nun in the World*. In the spirit of the Vatican Council he challenged religious congregations to examine their lives. What rules had become restraints to fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus? "Free from . . . free for" became an important balancing act. Religious congregations, inspired by Rome to examine their institutions against the spirit of Jesus and the spirit of their foundresses, entered a period of renewal. Intensive study, theological consultation, liturgical updating, and communal soul-searching produced general chapters where new democratic processes replaced blind obedience.

"American women, no longer willing to be treated like "children and idiots," represent a conundrum for the Roman church."

Renewal meant restructuring. Evaluating ministries meant changing some. Advanced studies, and inter-community and lay cooperation involved educational and philosophical exchanges. Sisters soon discovered the enrichment was mutual. Prejudice, misunderstanding, and elitism diminished.

The internal democratic process and the external exposure

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brought many religious to a maturity impossible to achieve before. "Activist" sisters marched on Selma, against the military build-up, and against those who deprive individuals of human rights. Doing so sometimes involved standing up to both governmental and ecclesial authorities. Those who had not marched across the bridge provided by Vatican II were aghast.

Today the Vatican, its male constituency formed by other cultures, views religious with suspicion expressed in suppression. Women's requests for recognition of equality and for expanded opportunities for ministerial service are often dismissed. Even among many men of good will there is a physical commitment, however inadvertent, to an early version of Canon Law which classified women with "children and idiots." Last August both Archbishop Pio Laghi, papal pronuncio to the U.S., and Archbishop John Quinn, head of a special pontifical commission to study U.S. religious, boycotted the meeting of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in New Orleans. Both canceled their scheduled speaking appearances because a third speaker, Margaret Farley, RSM, a Christian ethics professor at Yale, was a signer of last year's *New York Times* statement calling for dialogue on the issue of abortion. The statement caused a rift that remains unresolved between the religious who signed it, their congregations, and the Vatican. Negotiations are in process. Nevertheless, the boycott, a punitive and condemnatory measure, kept from the LCWR Assembly the two churchmen who, because of their positions, had the greatest responsibilty to what was being said at that meeting, not only by Margaret Farley, but by the 700 women in leadership positions.

By contrast, Archbishop Philip Hannan of New Orleans celebrated the Mass previously assigned to Archbishop Quinn, and was present at several of the sessions, in between visits to weather-damaged neighborhoods and shelters for those made homeless by Hurricane Elena. His expressions of solicitude for the women meeting in his diocese, his frequent reiteration of his personal esteem and the gratitude of the church for their dedication and committed service, provided healing of the painful rebuff afforded by his brother bishops.

U.S. women, no longer willing to be treated like "children and idiots," represent a conundrum for the Roman church. The Vatican, unable to comprehend the pluralism, diversity, or participatory nature of the U.S. church as a whole, targets women for the kind of control afforded classes of people in marginalized societies.

What has all this to do with me, thirty-four years after romantic notions brought me to religious life? Religious life is still Someone. It is the Jesus of my foremothers Catherine McAuley, Dorothy Day, and Caryll Houslander. It is the Jesus of Mary, the first altar on which he lay. It is the Jesus who drew the four American churchwomen to El Salvador where they suffered "the same fate as the poor."

Carrying on the work of Jesus, those women and the poor people to whom they ministered embraced a post-Vatican II relationship with the Someone of religious life — Jesus, who said, "I no longer call you servants, but friends."

Keith C. Burris

KEITH C. BURRIS *taught political theory at Washington & Jefferson College in Pennsylvania, wrote regularly for the* Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, *has published articles in* Commonweal *and* Christianity & Crisis, *and is now an editorial writer at the* Winston-Salem Journal.

WHEN Vatican II came, I was in Catholic grade school, and our elders were in turmoil. The nuns were upset. The pillars of the parish vowed resistance. Altar boys had just learned the Confiteor in Latin and now were told to forget it.

We had a pastor, in our little Ohio town, who was at first as confused as the rest of us. He came from and had done most of his pastoral work in Appalachia. Vatican II caught him. He started to read and rethink. He became an enthusiast. Here was the living church, the church embracing the world, the theology of hope and of witness. The Baltimore Catechism was out. My mother became a CCD teacher and got deeply involved in religious education. That's the way I grew up.

I am a Vatican II Catholic by generation as well as by choice. That makes my notion of Catholicism quite different from that of my elders. There is a sense in which the church is too easy for my generation. We don't have as much of our parents' anger and guilt, but we don't give enough of a damn either. That extends to this generation's priests, who have brought us the happy chat Mass, and a degree of facile egocentrism as embarrassing as it is debased.

"Altar boys had just learned the Confiteor in Latin and now were told to forget it."

What I most love about the Vatican II church is its social conscience. What most disappoints and confuses me is the lack of rigor and depth in the faith of persons my own age. What I miss most in the contemporary church of this country is a sense of holiness. When I go to Mass these days, I sometimes feel I am experiencing liturgy as burlesque.

My personal summary of the changing nature of the church since Vatican II is to say that somehow things went ironically and dolefully awry, that the right things in Catholicism were lost or de-emphasized and the wrong things kept and emphasized. How is it that the pope and the clergy matter as much as ever, and the liturgy less?

There is too little mystery and too much bureaucracy. I understand the spirit of Vatican II, in part, as the notion of a common priesthood. We are meant to do more than establish parish councils and self-appointed commissions of lay activists. I thought we were supposed to be freed from hierarchical churchiness. Isn't the Eucharist a statement of fundamental human equality far transcending Jefferson's?

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I am, apparently, one of the few readers of the bishops' recent statements on war, peace, and economics who thought them good. (I know I am one of the few editorial writers.) They were surely more worthy of Catholic attention than the counter statements of Messrs. Haig (he who fears the radicalism of sisters) and Simon (a charter member of the new gilded class). What are bishops to say about war? That peace through strength is the answer? What ought one to expect from the mouth of a bishop on the subject of poverty? We shall grow out of it? I am proud of the bishops' recent stands. But I am also astonished by the importance American Catholics attach to what the bishops say.

After all, John Cogley, James O'Gara, and William Clancy did not ask the pope's or the archbishop of New York's permission to oppose the Red Scare of the 1950s. Nor did Dorothy Day seek a commission from the Vatican envoy to the U.S. Eugene McCarthy did not ask the bishops if it would be all right to oppose the Vietnam War. Ivan Illich has never asked permission to think or do anything. How can Father Cardenal ask permission of Rome to live as best he can in a world Rome could never understand? The politicians of the church are not the church; they have earned a bit of benign and democratic neglect.

Yes, there must be women priests, and married priests, and truly local parish priests; the gradual withering away of clericalism. All rectories should be turned into hospitality houses and soup kitchens.

My own lament is the constant tinkering with the Mass; endless additions and subtractions, and loading it up with a lot of talk, Broadway musical tunes, and administrative reports either having to do with the diocese or parish. We are drowning in our property, our programs, the banality of bad preaching; and we are losing the precious heritage of the Mass. We are turning it into milk and cookies at three. And we are in danger of transforming the Cross into a smiley face.

No matter what they do in Rome, we must begin celebrating the unadulterated Mass again, without add-ons, including, in most cases, sermons. When there must be a sermon, let the pastor, if he is not a natural preacher, invite a lay person or theologian who has something to say into the pulpit. Or let the congregation read a short meditation. Let our celebrants learn the language of quietude. And a little bit of Latin — the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, the Gloria — could be let back in, couldn't it? What is needed most of all is a little reverence; let the Mass simply be.

We must teach our children there is greater mystery in the sanctuary than on the movie screen. We cannot do that with preachers as dumb to theology and the world as the Reverend Falwell. Or with saccharine and supercilious piety as demanding as a John Denver concert. Teach them theology and teach their teachers. Pass along the heritage of Catholic literature: from Chesterton's joy, to Flannery O'Connor's stories of the paradox of redemption, to Walker Percy's American existential, to Péguy writing of God's invocation to his daughter, Night.

The future? Cherish the Mass and the sacraments. Democratize our priesthood. Bear witness in the world. This is the vision of the Vatican II Catholic. It is not a vision designed to make the agony of belief palatable, but to recognize and accept that faith is for grownups. For this, we need the sustenance, above all, of a sacred liturgy.

Mary Pat Kelly

MARY PAT KELLY *spent six years in the Sisters of Providence order in Chicago. She is the author of* Martin Scorsese: The First Decade; *a forthcoming book,* The Sovereign Woman: Her Presence in the Literature of Ireland; *and a documentary,* Living for Ireland, *on the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) of Northern Ireland.*

I AM STILL a Catholic, thanks to Vatican II. When I speak with those of my contemporaries who were unable to make the transition from a treasured childhood faith to an adult appreciation of Catholicism, I always want to say, "If only you'd gone through the council." For them it was an event staged in Rome that resulted in a series of documents. For me it was, and is, an image. I see Pope John XXIII as he throws open the windows and invites the Spirit to breathe new life into the church.

As a child I knew the human face of the church through my uncles who are priests. In the summers, they acted as chaplains for a boys camp near the lakeside home our families had built together. There at the Chapel-of-the-Pines, my sisters and I set out the chalice, held the paten, and (the greatest thrill) rang the bells at the consecration. Suddenly the "boys only" rules of my home parish seemed manufactured. At Confirmations, First Communions, weddings and funerals, my uncles made personal the mysteries of sacramental reality. But the legitimacy of this flesh and blood connection waned in high school. As my mind grew, so did the difficulty of "taking it on faith." I began to wonder if I had to leave behind spiritual assurance along with the other things of childhood. Were what my uncles offered part of a security that had to be discarded if I were to enter adulthood?

> ***"Suddenly there was no question that couldn't be asked. No idea that couldn't be entertained. . . . Maybe those unbaptized babies didn't have to languish in limbo after all."***

Along came Vatican II. Suddenly there was no question that couldn't be asked. No idea that couldn't be entertained. We didn't have to dismiss automatically the beliefs of Protestants or Buddhists or Hindus. Maybe those unbaptized babies didn't have to languish in limbo after all. Before, we had viewed

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reality through a certain frame. Maybe now we could see beyond such limits.

By now I was in a novitiate. The new theology came to me like the music of the Beatles came to my friends — a call to look beyond. While the assassination of John Kennedy ended forever the innocent beliefs of the past, the tough-minded, brilliantly thought out work of Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Küng, Francis Durwell (like the hard-edged lyrics of John Lennon) called us from despair. Faith wasn't denial of the intellect, but rather a challenge to the mind.

The documents came out. First on the "Sacred Liturgy." The priest turned and spoke to us in the language of everyday life. When our convent chaplain demurred, my uncles came to celebrate a Mass full of banners and singing. Mass no longer belonged only to the priest, the choir, and the altar boys. It was ours. Fathers and mothers read the lessons and "commentated." The people were on the altar and everyone could ring the bells.

"The Decree on the Church" soon followed. In order to understand the church as the People of God, it became necessary to study the Scriptures. The insights of John McKenzie and Raymond Brown replaced Cecil B. DeMille images in my imagination. Without Vatican II, I couldn't today call forth phrases from the Psalms. I wouldn't know Isaiah or Jeremiah or Micah.

Not only could we study the Scriptures, with the "Decree on Ecumenism," we could draw on the understanding of other Christians. In fact, according to the document, the Spirit could be heard in all the religions of the world. What a relief not to have to believe that everyone else was benighted!

Love and freedom were the focus of the decree on the renewal of religious life. Religious men and women were those "who set out to follow Christ with greater liberty." Being a good sister meant "radiating joy," not fitting some standard that was half Victorian lady and half submissive child.

Then came a document that perhaps most reflected the experience of the faith in the New World: the "Declaration on Religious Liberty." Each person must see and recognize the demands of the Divine Law through his/her own conscience. Each must follow this conscience faithfully and must not be forced to act contrary to conscience. In December 1965, when this document came out, Martin Luther King, Jr. placed conscience above civil law.

The last conciliar document, "The Church in the Modern World," demanded solidarity with the whole human family. "Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo" in the hearts of the followers of Christ. "Genuinely human" was the face my uncles had shown me.

When, in recent years, fear seemed to edge out hope and joy in the church, I again looked to my uncles. One, seventy-five, is involved in parish life after years of college teaching. I came to him with a problem. My friend's husband had terminal cancer. They'd been married for thirty years, but he was a Protestant and the church of pre-Vatican II had refused to bless their marriage. She wanted very much to receive the sacrament of matrimony, but her local pastor required a three-month course of marriage instruction. In three months her husband would probably be dead. My uncle was coming to California; could he perform the ceremony? He questioned me as to the other impediments and seemed disappointed that there were no legal knots to be untangled. He married them in a Mass at their house. The husband was handed the Epistle for that Sunday: "If I speak with the tongues of men and angels and do not have love, I am a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal."

When I was a child, I was delighted with the faith of a child, but if that were all the church had to offer, I would not have been able to have stayed. Vatican II reminded us that in the end there are three things that count: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.

Palma E. Formica

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HANGING ON THE WALL of my bedroom is a papal blessing, a remnant of pre-Vatican II. It manages to survive each redecoration attempt. Of the many that I have collected from thoughtful patients and friends, only one continues in its place of honor. Smiling at me is the "pope of the people," John XXIII, a daily reminder that change has happened, that hope and confidence in a sinful, "holy church" is not incongruous. For me, John's *aggiornamento* is not yet, and perhaps never will be. We are a pilgrim people. The oasis of the council was not the promised land.

When the council documents were promulgated, I had a wary sense, one of cautious optimism. From my days as a student in Rome, I had developed the skepticism of the Italians. Let's not kid ourselves who really rules the Catholic church. Elitist, clerical bureaucrats. In the name of truth and God, they control even popes. That the council happened at all is surprising. The openness of its discussions and the implications of its documents are a testimony to the power of the Spirit.

For me personally, Vatican II was the affirmation of what I believe. We are each called to love and serve God with talents generously bestowed. "Brotherhood" with Christ includes even non-Catholics and non-believers. We can accept ourselves, and our failures, because we are loved and forgiven by a gracious God who loves us unceasingly. We are the church: a royal priesthood, but still a pilgrim people. The Good News *is* critically relevant to our lives today.

In the twenty years since the council, much has happened. Laypeople are becoming an integral part of the church as institution and mission. Bishops are more pastoral. Catholics in general have become more socially concerned. Spiritual renewal for the people of God is ongoing. These changes have not been universal, consistent, or uni-directional. But it is

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clear we are not the same church of twenty years ago..

I know many who have not rejoiced in this "new" church. They complain of being alienated. They dislike guitars and folk music. They question the stress on personal involvement and active participation. A few years ago my husband was dying. He insisted that his "last rites" be said in Latin, a sign that he had not been abandoned by the church of his youth. He was not alone in clinging to "tradition." Each of us seeks the perfect world according to his or her own perception. We must remember that we are a pilgrim people.

The exodus of substantial numbers of priests and religious has affected me as well as the whole church. My generation had been taught that these are the "chosen ones, called to the better way." Gradually, disillusionment gave way to understanding, love, and acceptance. But our church institutions suffer from a critical personnel shortage. As a Catholic, I worry about who will teach our children the truths of the faith, witness to Christ's healing of the sick, and bring us the sacraments.

Edmund Pellegrino noted recently in *Health Progress* that if the witness of the church is to survive in the health ministry, the "laity must play the primary, and in some instances, the sole role." Today, this applies to most ministries. The responsibility of witness and service is now that of the laity. The emphasis has shifted from institutional representatives to the people as church. Laypeople must now carry Christ not only to the secular marketplace but to Catholic institutions themselves. We must be prepared to be leaders, with all the risks entailed. We are no longer suckling infants. We must be the nurturers, the church.

Although laypeople are now serving in many different capacities, both in parishes and dioceses, the problem of too few priests remains critical and unmet. Parishes are far too large. Our clergy is aging and stressed. Too few young men are training for the priesthood. Nor has the establishment of the permanent diaconate provided a solution. Our bishops have got to address the issue. As church, we need "ordained" ministers. We face the reality that the ordination of women will not happen under the present leadership. (Perhaps, the crisis will continue until there is no other option.) The admission of married men to the order of the diaconate should have given impetus to those who have the power to ordain to reconsider the celibacy issue. The difficulty of not accepting a married clergy rests with the celibates — not us. I marvel at their truculence. I marvel that they refuse to consider the readmission to the active ministry those who are ordained but have married. (Is there an "ex-priest" or simply one who is not active? Did marriage "desacramentize" holy orders?) What a waste of resources! Who will be held responsible for "burying these talents"?

> ***"Hanging on the wall of my bedroom . . . smiling at me is the "pope of the people," John XXIII, a daily reminder that change has happened, that hope and confidence in a sinful "holy church" is not incongruous."***

I am an ordinary laywoman, not schooled in the great philosophical and theological debates. Yet who among us can miss these problems of the institutional church? As our bishops meet to evaluate the effects of Vatican II, they must remember that they are our voice at the synod. We, too, are the church.

Stuart Dybek

STUART DYBEK, *a graduate of Loyola University in Chicago and a one-time case worker with the Cook County Department of Public Aid, is a writer and poet. His works include* Childhood and Other Neighborhoods *and* Brass Knuckles, *a book of poetry. He is a co-recipient of the 1985 O. Henry Award.*

IN 1971 I was living in Iowa City, attending the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, and working that summer on a story about a man inside a fake elephant who ends up running amok inside a church. At one point in the story the character remembers a requiem Mass he'd attended as a child, and feels haunted again by the grim verses of the *Dies Irae*. I knew I needed to put the exact words that he was remembering into the story, but I could no longer recall them. This surprised me, for as a child I'd memorized the entire prayer over the years of 8 A.M. requiem Masses, and had even recited it once — by heart, as we used to say — to the amazement of my fifth-grade class and the nun who taught it. Later, it seemed an easy transition from that to an appreciation for the poetry of Edgar Allen Poe.

What I needed to research my story was a *St. Joseph's Missal*. I phoned the closest church and a priest invited me to drop by the rectory. He was friendly, but when I explained what I was after he became suddenly guarded. "We don't use that any longer," he said, somewhat suspiciously and perhaps rightly so. "It's from the old days."

I presumed the border of the "old days" must have been established, by his count, six years earlier with the conclusion of Vatican II. That was 1965, a year of protests and marches, a good year for music even on AM stations. I'd just graduated from college. My undergrad years had coincided with the years of the council, but by that point the church was no longer an educational force in my life. There was a sense then that an education more vital and morally engaged was available on the streets, in the news, from the music pouring from the radio. What was going on in the capitals, in Rome, or especially in Washington, was hardly the cutting edge. Vatican II, for all its progressive intentions, seemed like the church playing catch up. Though I could appreciate its ecumenical spirit, I'd have been more impressed at the time by some gesture that seemed more directly related to the civil-rights and anti-war move-

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ments — say, demoting Cardinal Spellman to sub-deacon.

In retrospect, that assessment of Vatican II seems severe. Vatican II appears very much part of the times, part of that same wave of change that manifested itself so dramatically in the U.S. In spirit, at least, it probably continues to encourage the more radical elements within the church by contributing a strong sense of unfinished business.

Still, even when the subject matter of my writing deals with aspects of Catholicism, the effect of Vatican II seems remote. I'm not especially anxious to examine the psychic and emotional sources for what I write. My guess is that they are rooted in the "old days." I'm aware of a split between what might be called an outer vision — looking out, that is, at the world — and an inner vision. As an outside observer my sympathies lie with the sense of change, of democratizing the church, that I associate with Vatican II. But my inner vision, the one looking in on the private world of imagination, is far more conservative.

A writer can approach religion from so many different aspects — as a system of morals, a study of manners, a source of mystery. Not, of course, that these are mutually exclusive categories. A book like Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair*, for example, combines them all. But most writers have an identifiable emphasis. Philip Roth and Isaac Bashevis Singer might both be termed Jewish writers, but what intrigues each about his Jewish roots is very different. Roth is a realist. His theme often has to do with the individual's need to define himself against aspects of his background that are at once dear and stifling. In Roth's work it is the individual's responsibility to create a private moral system. Singer is more intrigued by community and mystery. His stories abound with apparitions, spirits, dybbuks, spells, and miracles.

> ***"Vatican II has made it necessary for me to explain how people once fasted before receiving Communion."***

As I indicated, by the time of Vatican II, I no longer relied on an institution as a moral educator. However, in the world of the Slavic and Hispanic neighborhoods I often write about, leaving out churches would be like leaving out taverns. Religion there is an aspect of the landscape. It affords a shared vocabulary and system of myth by which a sense of wonder and the sacred can be expressed. But in expressing these feelings, the allegiance of most writers is, I think, to the culture being portrayed rather than to any theology.

To tell his story the writer appropriates sources of power from his own background. In this inner world the emotive importance of religion may have infinitely more to do with the recollection of a grandmother mumbling a rosary than with the edicts of cardinals. The crucial images and memories of one's childhood are not promising material for reform. Much of the power of poetry and story telling, like the power of ritual, exists not in reason, but in images and associations: the blessing of throats, relics, a vision of hell.

In this inner world I suspect it is almost as if Vatican II never occurred. Through the "Kumbaya" era the statues still stood with their plaster halos, visionary eyes, and painted wounds in the little neighborhood churches.

My guess is that in terms of the inner vision, what Vatican II has done is to push the old days back, to make them a little more ancient. I've been working this summer on a story seen through a boy's eyes about a young woman who faints each Sunday at 11:15 Mass. Vatican II has made it necessary for me to explain how people once fasted before receiving Communion.

Nancy Rambusch

NANCY RAMBUSCH, *presently at the Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy at Yale, has just been appointed Director of the Early Childhood Education Agency for Child Development for the City of New York.*

I WAS INVOLVED both in child rearing and career building at the time the council started. I had been married eleven years, had two children, and was organizing a national educational enterprise serving preschool children. I was attempting to reconfigure the received wisdom of my religious upbringing and education in the conscious creation of a family environment. I was also reshaping my identity as a Catholic, specifically as a woman who was Catholic, femaleness being the more primordial of these twin states. I may have read too much Paul Claudel. In any case, I saw woman, in a clearly masculine Divine Economy, as "other." Women in the church I saw largely as outsiders, subsidiary and subservient, considered less as persons than as agglomerations of ascribed categories and roles: the lay, the religious, the married, the single, the virgin, the mother.

What I expected from the council's cosmic agenda was initially unclear. What came through was a sense of promise, openness, and possibility as the church posited its presence in the modern world and acknowledged a willingness to learn from that world. "Renewal" was the operative word. Renewal presaged change, change that would encompass women as well as men.

Since we Americans suffered neither the historical fatigue nor the cynicism of Europeans, we expected our post-conciliar institutions to reflect their own "renewed" rhetoric. (*Jubilee* magazine, first published in 1953, called itself a magazine of "the church and her people." In a post-conciliar world, it would have been called "the church as her people") As new ministries developed, women eagerly embraced them, only to discover that the "new" ministries were framed according to "old" categories.

While the council was deliberating in Rome, a women's movement was gathering strength in America. A seismic shift in middle-class women's awareness of themselves, of their

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identities, and of their possibilities was occurring. Many women responded to the blandishments of self-realization, never intending that their need for equality would conflict with their family values. Others rejected the isolation of the "woman's separate sphere" philosophy which had kept women at home with their children, out of the "real" world's traffic, since the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Most American women, forced into the world of work, left their families by economic necessity, not personal preference. As only one of many interrelated social problems, economic pressure drove more and more women into the work force, causing them to leave behind younger and younger children. It has all added up to an extremely complex and troubling state of affairs in which the values of nurturance — traditional, unpaid women's work — are pitted against those of the marketplace in an unequal contest. This leaves no one at home to care for the young or the old.

The church must give serious attention to where women are. Traditionally, that attention has been given to where women ought to be. In the early days of television, Steve Allen played a character called the Answer Man. He supplied an answer and the contestant provided the correct question. Thus, if the answer was "9 W," the question might be "Herr Wagner, do you spell your name with a V?" American Catholic women have been participants in such a game. To answers, clerically supplied, they were expected to confect questions and lifestyles that "fit." The American bishops' recently announced intention to draft a pastoral letter on women in society and in the church, attendant upon consultation with American Catholic women, signals an awareness of their need for questions.

Twenty years after the council, committed Catholic women still seem to hope that an institutional church which has excluded them from its ruling councils, will alchemically reflect their "presence" in the shaping of both the American church's present and its future agendas. How can this be? There are several possible explanations: (1) Women are, by nature, incurable optimists. (2) Milton had it right: "He for God only, she for God in him." (3) What we have here is a clear case of cognitive dissonance. (4) It's all talk, anyway. (5) All of the above. (6) None of the above.

Joseph Sobran

JOSEPH SOBRAN *is a senior editor of the* National Review, *a syndicated columnist, and a commentator on CBS Radio's Spectrum. He is the author of* The Conservative Manifesto: The Philosophy, the Passion, the Promise *(Empire Books, 1982).*

IN 1961, when I was fifteen, I became a Catholic. My parents were both lapsed Catholics; I had never been baptized. So I came to Catholicism in a somewhat unusual way, without most of the memories, affections, and early childhood experiences of the "born" Catholic.

I came to Catholicism by falling in love with it. Yes, I was persuaded by its truth and evidence; but I was also drawn by its dignity and beauty, enraptured by its inexhaustible traditions and rituals, which deepened its mystery by the very bounty of its self-disclosure. And that, I believe, was the experience of nearly every convert in an age of many conversions. The mystery was not opacity; but the more you penetrated, the more you found ahead of you.

When John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, I was a little puzzled by the hopes this act raised in so many American Catholics. I thought the church made perfect sense as she was; you could believe or disbelieve, but I didn't see how you could really feel that anything vital was lacking.

I drifted out of the church within three years of my conversion. It was a matter of weak faith and weak flesh. I felt no bitterness whatever toward the church; I'd never suffered at the hands of tyrannical priests or sadistic nuns of the sort disaffected Catholics are always talking about. In fact, I'd never met these stock figures of the ex-Catholic memoir. I simply lost my faith — or failed to keep faith.

> ***"What we were seeing was a huge theological meltdown. The Catholic church in America was becoming Americanized. . . ."***

At the same time, I never quite fell out of love with Catholicism. It was so beautiful! I was glad I'd been a Catholic, since the church was so obviously the vehicle and mother of everything I loved in Western culture. How could someone who had never been Catholic understand *Hamlet,* with its passionate drama of death and sacraments? (Protestants since Coleridge have been misreading it as a psychological study.)

It was always a comfort to me to know that the Catholic church was still there. I envied believers and never tried to weaken their faith.

So I was shocked in the late sixties when I looked back and saw what had happened to the church since Vatican II. I can't say much about other countries, but in America Catholicism had become terribly . . . Americanized. The English liturgy had taken on the national vices of shallowness and crassness. In order to encourage "participation" of the laity, the church bureaucracy at some level had mandated the singing of hymns that were neither popular nor traditional; on my rare visits to Catholic churches I noticed how much discomfort the congregation felt when required to burst into song. Who on earth had got the idea that this sort of music, or Muzak, had any cultural purchase on the souls of the faithful? It sounded as if it had been left over from a provincial hootenanny.

All this in the name of Vatican II — at least as interpreted by its American hucksters. The sixties were the time of "relevance," when topicality was the rage, and it was useless to suggest that people needed fixed reference points outside the

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currents of the moment. The church was falling into the trap of trying to justify herself in terms inappropriate to her nature. Once you try to be up-to-date, you are in perpetual danger of falling out-of-date — even assuming that "relevance" is a relevant criterion.

This unfortunate tone spilled over into matters of doctrine. Theologians were doubting everything, including the divinity of Christ. I wondered why they didn't just leave, as I had when I lost my faith. Some, of course, did. Priests were running off to get married. Nuns were kicking up their heels. The hierarchy was afraid to assert its authority, except in political matters about which it knew less than I did.

I was appalled. My old love was making a terrible fool of herself. I could understand leaving the church, but not defacing her — especially from within. I dipped into some of the modish Catholic writers, and found something worse than simple heresy (a word that wasn't used any more): a general evasiveness. All the doubts never seemed even to culminate in a robust denial that would make possible a new affirmation. At least during the Reformation people knew what they were arguing about and what the stakes were.

What we were seeing was a huge theological meltdown. The Catholic church in America was becoming Americanized, all right. Religion in America, in keeping with the national character, tends to be functional, convenient, unitarian — a consumer good like microwave ovens and fast-food joints, tailored to impatient people who just like to feel good, who don't even comprehend the idea of authority, and who go to community colleges where education is vocational and the meaning of literature and philosophy can be snatched from Monarch Notes.

Eventually I saw that the battle within the American church was really revolving around birth control. Contraceptives are the ultimate consumer goods. They make sex and children matters of consumption. The advocates of contraception, of course, had the entire current culture — a thoroughly commercial culture in which the customer is always right — on their side. That culture could make no sense of chastity; virginity, as an ideal, was nonsense — because the whole idea of consecration and sacrifice was alien.

I certainly had no difficulty understanding the desire for consumer sex. I spent fifteen years outside the church before I came back. What I never understood was the audacity of people who could even try to adapt the teachings of the church to their own appetites.

At the center of the church I love is an unembarrassed and uncompromising insistence on transcendence, of which virginity, personified in Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, was an important sign. The church's exaltation of virginity answers to something deep in our nature. It tells us that virtue means a hard daily struggle for each of us, but that victory, by God's grace, is possible. Such things are never said in the secular press, where the abortionist now offers his services and religion appears as either a menace or an irrelevance. The pity is that they are said so seldom within the American church nowadays. The Blessed Virgin herself is sometimes hidden away as dirty pictures used to be — largely because the consumer society now sells dirty pictures openly. Her purity has become indecent.

As long as the American church keeps Marian devotion furtive, we will get along famously with our neighbors; we will be well adapted to our environment; we will be spared any danger of martyrdom. But I can't imagine anyone falling in love with such a church.

Garry Wills

GARRY WILLS *taught classics at Johns Hopkins and is presently Henry R. Luce Professor of American Culture and Public Policy at Northwestern University. His many books include* Nixon Agonistes, Bare Ruined Choirs, Confessions of a Conservative, Explaining America: The Federalist, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, *and* Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment.

ALL REVOLUTIONS are betrayed, every historical promise compromised. Every large process of human change goes just far enough to be "too far" for those who opposed the change anyway, and stalls well before it makes sense even to those who advocated it. The result satisfies no one, but is irreversible. It is vulnerable to any critic, and an embarrassment to most of its friends. We call it — because it is — progress.

Liturgical reform came, in the mid-sixties, to St. Pius X parish in Baltimore when a liberal priest, well-meaning, muddleheaded, patrolled the aisles shouting at people who did not sing the English hymns. Most revolutions herald a coerced freedom. If change was to come in the church, it had to come by fiat, even if the command was to "express yourself."

Once, we learned irrelevant things very well. Now, we seem to learn very little but self-expression. Dead Latin scholarship has yielded to live vernacular inarticulateness. Priests

"If change was to come in the church, it had to come by fiat, even if the command was to "express yourself."

have learned that they do not have to say the Office; they have not learned that they do not have to be male. We shed an encumbrance without gaining complementary insight. "Natural law" used to be taught in a large context as well as misapplied to contraception. Now it is misapplied without being taught.

Mystery was dissipated. So was mystification (some of it), and fakery (the more outright kinds). The result is more prosaic, but honester. That is all gain, and it is enough — it is the basic thing we owe to God. The rest, however lovely, was frills, and, when dishonest, a betrayal of something bigger than any revolution.

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Screen

BAD & PLENTY

ELEGANT HYSTERIA

THE ENDING of *Plenty* is the film's most brilliant touch. A young English agent (Meryl Streep) who worked with the French Resistance stands breathing in sparkling fresh morning air on a Normandy hillside just at the end of World War II. The hill descends from left to right, the natural way we read a shot, providing us a visual suggestion of an open world of endless possibilities that matches Streep's joyous intoxication. When a farmer beckons her to his cottage below for some breakfast, it takes her several minutes to follow. The scene perfectly registers her desire, literally (or visually) not to come down.

The ending also points up the irony of *Plenty*. The opening of the film documents Streep's excitement during her tour of duty in France. But the middle details how she lost the zest, the fresh air of that morning, once she "came down" to postwar reality. *Plenty*'s end, to use film parlance, is "open"; but its middle, its real story, is one of confinement and how to deal with it.

According to playwright David Hare, *Plenty* is about "lost ideals," the ideals that Streep is supposed to possess during the war and adhere to fitfully afterward. To make the film, Hare has collaborated with Australian director Fred Schepisi, a student of outsiders in such films as *The Iceman* and *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*. Of the new work, Hare says simply, "This is a film about spending one's whole life in dissent."

Plenty's plot covers twenty years. After her underground service, Streep is seen adjusting with difficulty to postwar life, getting and quitting several jobs, falling in and out of love and marriage with a British diplomat, and never really settling down. Her wanderings are projected against the backdrop of English society, first impoverished in the lean late forties, then stirred by a boom period of fifties "plenty," jolted in 1956 by Suez, and finally reverting to a drab conformity. "There are so many things I want to change," Streep claims at one point, "and I don't know how."

Streep has said that her role in *Plenty* made her feel parallels to her own experiences ranging from American college life in the late sixties to the "big chill" today. But *Plenty* never escapes its English setting, nor Hare's roots in Osborne's and Pinter's assaults on the stuffy falseness of British class society. Streep also claims that *Plenty* has a feminist element, and that much is certainly true: in her character we watch a new version of the fifties "angry young man," made famous by Osborne.

Miraculously, Streep shows no signs of aging during *Plenty*'s score of years. Yet her inability to grow crow's feet is the least of the film's problems. More importantly, *Plenty*, despite its origin in theater, is extremely undramatic. Hare never provides a convincing demonstration of what ideals Streep had during World War II, nor what he means when he says that she spent her "whole life in dissent." Streep never shows much idealism about changing things in her postwar life — unless Hare wants us to think, at this late date, that having a baby by a man she doesn't know, or walking out on her job as an ad executive during an unsuccessful dog food commercial, are really strong or original symbols of dissent. *Plenty* isn't about "lost ideals" or dissenting; it's about elegant hysteria.

The core problem with Streep's character isn't merely that her fierceness lacks any constructive element, but that watching her destroy things becomes boring much too quickly. Her key line doesn't involve a desire to change things without knowing how, but is a smiling, almost lewd confession that "I like to lose control." Unfortunately — both for moral and dramatic reasons — she experiences little conflict over this. She manages to stay calm awhile, it seems, only to enjoy more the fun of shattering whatever peace that she, or anyone with whom she is associated, has come to attain. The result is sheer tedium. It's one thing to wrestle with demons, or to be overwhelmed by them — or even to give in. It's another thing to lasciviate with them, and celebrate the pleasure therein as some sort of measure of heroic worth. Unfortunately, Hare doesn't present his "angry young woman" ironically. He seems to equate her tantrums with sincerity. He may have intended some parallels with Molière's *The Misanthrope*, and its portrayal of honest anger against hypocrisy. But what we get are simplistic counter-cultural associations of madness and heroism.

Without interior conflict, *Plenty* lacks external conflict as well. In over two hours, only one person ever challenges Streep and tells her where to get off. The biggest wimp is her husband (Charles Dance, from *A Jewel in the Crown*), an urbane foreign service officer who, we are supposed to believe, is so chivalrous that he marries her despite her hysteria and determines to save her even after she, quite efficaciously, wrecks his career. John Gielgud — with typical aplomb playing a daffy but sweet British ambassador — is made to put up with one of Streep's tirades over Suez, despite the fact he has already resigned his post because of it. Additional comic relief is supplied by a bohemian (Tracey Ullman) who assists Streep in her self-realization by supplying pot. Momentarily, the rock star, Sting, supplies some genuine drama as a worker whose rugged good looks attract Streep into having a baby by him; she abandons him when he makes the mistake of loving her. Too bad Hare, like Streep, gets rid of him.

Fortunately, someone finally calls Streep's bluff and restores electricity to a predictable plot. Near the end, Streep pursues answers at the Foreign Office regarding why her husband's career is blocked. The answer, from her antics, is obvious. But Streep corners the chief diplomat there, played superbly by Ian MacKellen. As Streep gets frustrated at his polite evasions, she finally blurts, "How can you live forever not saying what you mean?" MacKellen answers,

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straightfaced, "It's my job. It's called diplomacy." For one brief shining moment, Hare addresses the issues of sincerity and conformity *ambiguously*, as Molière might. MacKellen is at least able to throw Streep back momentarily — before she resorts to another tantrum. For once in my life, I found myself cheering a bureaucrat.

Perhaps *Plenty* might have worked if its opening gave a deeper sense of how the war molded Streep's character. It opens promisingly, with a picturesque freeze frame of Streep on a secret operation in France. But the war scenes degenerate quickly, with Streep resorting to some typical nervous gestures when encountering another English agent (Sam Neill), and then going on to a tremulous one-night stand with him. War makes people nervous, to be sure, and needy. But Streep's character is unbelievable, and unadmirable, because she's *already* hysterical and maladjusted; we don't need postwar proof of that. Moreover, she says nothing about why she's there, why she fought — except in a later anniversary television interview where she sounds about as convincing as she did in *Kramer vs. Kramer* describing how she "found herself" in therapy in California. Played this way, Streep never seems to have had ideals to lose. An actress of more secure tragic gifts might have conveyed something deeper in these scenes.

In truth, another actress was available, Kate Nelligan. She played the role on Broadway, and was offered the film part after Streep initially turned it down. When Streep reconsidered, Neilligan was dropped (so much for sincerity and authenticity). But Nelligan might have given the early scenes the authority they need. She has fire and flint, as anyone who saw *Eye of The Needle* (1981) can witness, and as *Eleni*, a December release about a heroine of the Greek civil wars, will probably attest.

The producers went with Streep for obvious box office reasons. There's an apparently unquenchable need in our age of cultural boom for lofty icons. Meryl Streep supposedly fits the bill for some people. She's the ultimate Designer Actress, she has a Yale imprint, and in *Plenty* she even comes equipped with an English accent. But in fact Streep has abandoned her real gift — for comedy — which made her theatrical name. In film, with all her nervousness, she has struck gold only once, with *Sophie*'s *Choice*, and there perhaps her best line was a comic malapropism on a searsucker suit. Her natural gift is humor. In tragedy she resorts to mannerisms, and at heroism she's out of her depth.

TOM O'BRIEN

Books: DEMOCRACY— & RENTING HUMANS

A PREFACE TO ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY
Robert A. Dahl
California, $14.95, 184 pp.

David P. Ellerman

IN THIS short book, America's foremost democratic theorist has provided a major statement of the case for economic democracy, the application of democratic principles to the governance of economic enterprises. Robert A. Dahl is often associated with empirical political science and interest group pluralism, but his normative commitment to democratic principles was evident in his well-known *A Preface to Democratic Theory* and is echoed in the title and content of this work. Moreover, the specific concern with workplace democracy has been an abiding theme throughout his professional life, from his early writings on workers' control and the British Labor Party, through his provocative *After the Revolution?*, to his Jefferson Lectures delivered in Berkeley, rewritten in this book, and published upon his retirement as the Sterling Professor of Political Science at Yale.

In the first chapter, Dahl asks with Tocqueville if equality is dangerous to liberty. As an empirical political scientist, he marshals facts to show that the transitions from democracy to authoritarianism (e.g., in Latin America) have hardly come from an excess of democratic equality.

Chapter Two begins to build the case for self-government in economic enterprises. Serious theory-building in this area is so new that there are major alternative conceptions of capitalism at stake. Dahl's view and an alternative viewpoint will be sketched here. Dahl sees a conflict between the right to self-government (in the political and economic spheres) and the right to property, particularly the "ownership of economic enterprises." He notes that the old liberal arguments for small-scale property as promoting freedom and equality, which might have been applicable in Mill's day, have by a curious metamorphosis been used to support modern corporate capitalism with its obscene inequalities and corrupting influence on the political democratic process. The Fortune 500 are not 500 family farms.

With the property argument for corporate capitalism rendered a non sequitur in Chapter Two, Dahl presents several normative arguments for economic democracy in the remaining three chapters. Dahl gives little weight to the argument that workplace democracy will build democratic character and increase political participation. The empirical evidence is mixed partly because the ownership structures have been so ambiguous (e.g., the plywood co-ops). Moreover, expecting isolated experiments in workplace democracy to quickly alter democratic attitudes in the midst of modern American society is akin to promoting music appreciation by playing Mozart in the middle of a Manhattan traffic jam. It would be hard to hear the music, but by no fault of Mozart.

In Chapter Three, Dahl considers several alternative forms of worker ownership: traditional worker co-ops like the plywood co-ops, worker capitalist

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schemes like the conventional ESOPs (Employee Stock Ownership Plans), Yugoslav-type social property firms, and Mondragon-type worker co-ops with cooperative ownership and individual equity accounts. While he encourages pragmatism in transitional mechanisms, Dahl's favored goal is a decentralized economy of self-governing cooperative enterprises modeled after the highly successful Mondragon cooperatives.

Chapter Four presents the main case, a non-utilitarian, rights-based argument that the right to democratic self-government extends directly to the economic enterprise and overshadows the feeble attempts to extend traditional property arguments to the modern corporation.

Chapter Five rounds out the discussion. Dahl properly ridicules those who think it is important to classify self-governing enterprises using the traditional dichotomy of "capitalism or socialism." He mentions the problem of democratic leadership in self-governing firms but notes that the problem is clearly shared with political democracy. And finally, he comments on several short-term transitional methods such as government assistance to the conversion of bellwether firms in key industries or beefed-up versions of the Scandinavian plans to democratically restructure major firms.

There is an alternative way for democratic theory to conceptually analyze capitalist production which nevertheless arrives at the same conclusions. What is the legal basis for the authority of capitalists or their managers over the employees in a capitalist firm? Does the lineage run to property or to contract? Dahl takes the standard property-view that the capitalists' authority runs to property. As a monarch might rule by virtue of ultimate ownership of the land, so the capitalists or their agents govern production by virtue of their "ownership of economic enterprises." But this is not the only way to look at things.

The alternative contract-view points out that, by itself, the ownership of corporations is only the *indirect* ownership of capital. The determination of who governs production is determined by the

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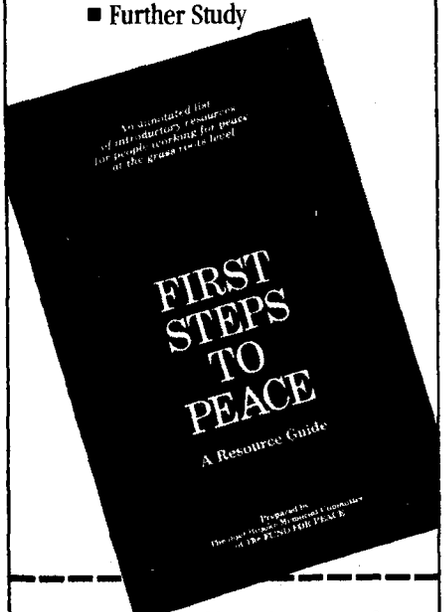

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structure of contracts, by whether the owners of capital hire labor or labor hires capital. If a corporation's capital assets are hired out rather than labor being hired in, then in no straightforward way do the owners of the corporation govern the production process using their assets. Hiring out assets means that the legal authority to govern production derives from contract, not property.

In capitalist production, the manager's legal authority over workers is based on the contract to hire or rent those workers, the employer-employee contract. Capital ownership is important but in an indirect manner; the market power of capital insures that capital hires labor rather than vice-versa. The standard property-view short-circuits this fact pattern. It mistakenly imputes the authority to govern production directly to capital ownership, and neglects the employment contract.

On the alternative contract-view, Dahl's attack on property is misdirected. Property is not abused by being rented. The question is whether people are thus abused. The legal keystone of capitalism is not the alleged property right to govern production, but the contract for the renting of human beings, the employment contract. Nor should this terrain be unfamiliar to democratic theory. The employment contract is the economic nine-to-five version of the political *pactum subjectionis* used by old liberal theorists to ground non-democratic government in contract. For economic democracy, as for political democracy, the objection to subjection lies in the Enlightenment natural law doctrine which holds that people are endowed with "certain inalienable rights." Among these rights is the right of democratic self-government, a right unabridged and inalienable by consent or by contract. That too is Dahl's conclusion.

Young Turkestan

THE MORROW ANTHOLOGY OF YOUNGER AMERICAN POETS
Edited by Dave Smith and David Bottoms
Morrow, $17.95, 784 pp.

Paul West

ON FIRST looking into these realms of gold, I had an idea of the kind of poet I wanted to find: a *rara avis*, profound, fluent, articulate; a poet in the line of Wallace Stevens, tuned to the finest pitch of lexical precision; someone holistic and original, and above all unafraid of using the full orchestra of language. In other words, an able-bodied visionary with a spell so palpable that the rest of the world falls away.

Diane Ackerman is such a poet, at once a lyrical and metaphysical virtuoso, the first name in the anthology. Michael Blumenthal is such a poet too, though he aims at a suaver splendor than she, and so is Albert Goldbarth, although more caustic, more of an annotator than these two. Alfred Corn, Rodney Jones, Heather McHugh, Sandra McPherson, Robert Morgan, and Pattiann Rogers complete my list, extorting from the reader exactly the kind of attention they need, opening up the world to a degree unknown and unimaginable to some of the others, whose poetic passion in some instances extends only as far as naming lunchcounters, intersections, and neighborhood streets.

The editors too back away from splendor, oratory, magniloquence, selecting even from the poets named above hardly their most radiant work, which is a pity. You have to know these poets already to get the just measure of their weight and dominance, and to see how accurately or not the samples evince them. The chimera suggests itself of a generational portrait based on poets' least characteristic poems, as if to prove (in this instance) that the younger poets, all born since 1940, are just plain, down-home folks. The forceful anthologist can always lead you astray and the only thing that saves you, and the poets, is the incentive an anthology gives you to go from a few poems to a poet's books, and to do this for some two dozen poets. In a way anthologies assume spurious power, exercising a synecdoche

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function: a part for the whole, a much-thumbed part for an ignored whole, like the survey tomes used in colleges, like the book reviews in the glossy magazines (the reviewed book somehow doing duty for all the books passed over). At least this anthology has bulk and an abundance of names (though you will look in vain for Emily Grossholz, Pamela Hadas, Peter Klappert, or Wyatt Prunty).

If you count up, the nine poets I have mentioned average 6.7 pages apiece, whereas Dave Smith gets fourteen, as does Larry Levis, while Norman Dubie, William Heyen, and Robert Pinsky get thirteen. David Bottoms gets seven. You stare at such disproportion and you wonder. One hundred and four poets into 784 pages ought to yield around 7.5 pages per poet, so it seems that some of these poets must be almost twice as important as others. Maybe the older poets get more pages; I couldn't be bothered checking, but it does seem reasonable to even out the ration. If they're in, they're in, and entitled to equal time.

Between the extremes here of confident, articulate style and minimalist stuff that knows no recitative of the imagination, there is worthwhile work by the editors, by Garrett Kaoru Hongo, McKeel McBride, William Matthews, Molly Peacock, Alberto Rios, Janet Sylvester, and Sherod Santos, much of it sharp and eloquent, all of it reminding you that it's no use transcending a cowshed unless you can write about it first of all as a cowshed.

In the space remaining, savor some of the best. The opportunistic eye of Goldbarth links language to hitherto uninspected phenomena that seem quite different from it, but aren't:

> This is how the page must feel: it doesn't understand God. Whatever the language on that page, an Eastern script as fine as dendrite, or the harsh Germanic squatting of black retrievers at obedience school. . . .

REVIEWERS

DAVID P. ELLERMAN *is co-founder and staff economist of the Industrial Co-operative Association.*

PAUL WEST*'s tenth novel,* Rat Man of Paris, *will be published early next year.*

In a mushroom-hunting poem, Michael Blumenthal makes his blunt point in fastidiously wrought cadences:

> It is so much like life, which is why I love it: the delectable and the deadly so resembling each other, the sexual rise of the false morel a mere flirtation, and the sweet viscosity we'd like to swim in an elegy to movement.

And, on spiders, Ackerman, both observant and formally mimetic, reminds you of Marianne Moore:

> holding out for that bronchial shudder of the net, when something angel-faint, ensnared and hairy begins the tussle in rigged silk that can start a greedy eye, make gossamer hum and, at long last, even their slack jams quiver.

Although the anthology isn't full of such delights, they are there, and no one who lives with it for several months, pondering and savoring, going afield and fleshing out a number of slight acquaintances, will have wasted time. The editors speak vividly of poems that "might blow

(Continued on page 588)

Church/world watch

(Continued from page 554)

tion. Two published pieces are available: a seminal article in *America*, "Freedom, Authority, and Community" (Dec. 3, 1966), which has the richness and density of an outline for a book, and his brief contribution done for the Episcopal Church about theological freedom, "A Will to Community."

One can only speculate where this research might have taken Murray in the multiple debates about freedom which have marked the post-conciliar church. He might have pushed forward our notion of freedom ecclesially as he had politically.

Both the upcoming synod, where freedom will be an issue, and the approach of another round of elections, where religion will be an issue, make us aware of how much we owe Murray, how much we miss him, and how badly we need other voices of his quality in church and state.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

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us away with vision as radical as a body scanner or passion as intense as Job's or language as shimmering and indelible as Whitman's." They have browsed through thin volumes in search of "emotional thunderclap[s]," and have found quite a few. There are muses in the clouds, and contemporary American poetry, unlike its fictional counterpart, is indeed "vigorous, rich, and diverse."

Anthony Hecht's introduction, witty and searching, luminously points out that, for these poets, "performance . . . takes place on the page." They include an airwoman, a psychotherapist, a lawyer, an editor, a sheepherder, a filmmaker, and a librarian. Most of them are, as he says, "shockingly well-educated," although more inclined to speech than to song. That they exist at all must be news to many, as well as a tribute to something perdurable in humanity. They cost just over seventeen cents each, taken like this at least, but some of them are makers beyond price, and will outlast a book whose very title guarantees to self-destruct by 1995. All credit to Morrow for doing it big, handsome, and cheap. I feel sorry for the poet mentioned by Hecht, "kept out at the whim of her publisher, without a word of explanation." Nothing ages a younger poet faster than something like that.

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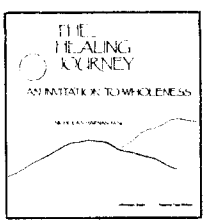

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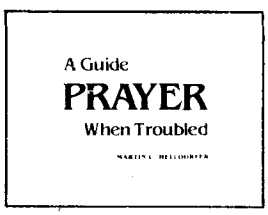

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 548)

In particular, I object to the use of loaded phrases which insinuate without informing. Thus you say that Nicaragua's leaders "appear captives of an outlook that scorns bourgeois liberties . . ." You do not spell out what such liberties are, but the following list occurred to me:

Free elections. Shortly after overthrowing U.S.-backed dictator Somoza the Sandinistas promised to hold elections. This promise was kept in 1984. A Canadian church and human rights delegation which observed the elections concluded: "We have unanimously concluded that the elections conform to the highest international standards for free, open, and democratic elections and were conducted in a manner that is in the best of democratic traditions." The United States used its considerable power to slander the electoral process and to prevent countries from sending observers.

Free Press. Much as been made of the censorship of *La Prensa*. Thomas Walker, a political scientist and specialist on Nicaragua, states: "The only sigificant opposition paper *La Prensa* which, after most of its staff resigned, dedicated itself from the spring of 1980 to slanted, alarmist attacks on the revolutionary system." A Canadian observer in Nicaragua noted that *La Prensa* posts copies of all censored articles on a bulletin board outside its office, and that the majority of these articles deals with rumors of goods-shortages designed to promote economic panic.

Religious toleration and minority rights. A report of U.S. churches organized by the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of

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Churches of Christ concluded in 1984: there is "no basis for the charge of systematic religious persecution." The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, a Toronto ecumenical group, has studied the situation of the Miskito people using direct church contacts. The Committee does not deny that abuses have occurred, but states that these were neither ordered nor condoned by the Nicaraguan government. Further, the Committee provides evidence that the Sandinista government has taken steps to see that such abuses stop and that in fact "the treatment of the Miskitos by the Nicaraguan armed forces improved significantly in 1983 and 1984 despite the problems imposed by increased and brutal incursion of foreign-supported anti-government forces in the region."

Respect for International Law. It was the United States, not Nicaragua, which showed contempt for the World Court regarding U.S. mining of Nicaragua's harbors. Nicaragua was the first Central American nation to sign the Contadora peace proposal. Nicaragua's own peace proposals have been consistently dismissed without serious consideration by the United States.

Your statement that the outlook espoused by the Sandinistas "has a worldwide track record of economic failure" is again a substitution of loaded rhetoric for informed analysis. In fact, the early achievements of the Sandinistas were quite remarkable. They inherited a country with severe problems: housing shortages in Managua due to the 1972 earthquake and the 1979 bombing by Somoza before he left, a textile industry 90 percent inoperative due to revenge bombing by the National Guard, a huge national debt, massive illiteracy, virtually no medical services for ordinary citizens. The Sandinistas moved quickly and efficiently to renegotiate the debt (*not* to repudiate it). They put people to work in the literacy campaign and in providing health services in rural areas. Nicaragua's gross domestic product grew at the fastest rate of any Central American country in 1980 and 1981. Nor did the Sandinistas adopt a Soviet model for their economy. They have continued a mixed economy while resolutely trying to give economic benefits and power to the poor. If the Nicaraguan economy is now in trouble, it is more accurate to lay the blame on the U.S.'s undeclared war against Nicaragua, a war which has targeted the economy. The U.S. used its power to block World Bank loans. In 1983 Reagan slashed Nicaragua's sugar quota by 90 percent, and in 1985 announced a total boycott of Nicaragua. The U.S. funded contras have focused on destroying the economy with estimated damage to the state and cooperative sector alone of $237 million as of last October.

The United States is already waging war against Nicaragua. American policy has never been, and is not now, motivated by respect for the rights of Central Americans. Perhaps it is time for *Commonweal* to take off the ethnocentric blinkers and get off the fence.

JOAN REMPLE BISHOP

For one & only

Chicago Ill.

To the Editors: Compassion for the tragic AIDS victims [cf. George R. Kish's letter, September 6] should not deter us from noting that the "gays" who contract it are rarely, if ever, monogamous but participate with multiple partners. In evangelizing for acceptance of unnatural sex, it is unseemly for deviates to label as "sinful" those who oppose their lifestyle. And one might wonder how many victims were seduced as children.

NAME WITHHELD

The 'truly priestly'

Chatham, N.J.

To the Editors: Father Jim Nieckarz's piece on AIDS victims and the priests who do, or don't counsel them ["Our Fragile Brothers," July 12] reminds me of the priests of Grosse Isle, off Montreal, who ministered to fevered Irish immigrants in 1846 and 1847.

I shared the story with my fifth graders when we were studying immigration during the nineteenth century — how contact meant certain infection, how only one physician, a Dr. Douglas, went to Grosse Isle each day. And I told them of the priests, all young, all volunteers, who went to Grosse Isle and how all eight of them died.

The class was silent except for one Irish-American footballer who sobbed. Then a little girl many teachers considered not too bright, said, "They were *real* priests."

"What is a *real* priest?" I asked.

"Well," she said, "in our church there are many priests. They all say the same things, but some of them really mean it. *They* are real priests; *they* would have gone to that island."

I think she would bestow the same accolade upon Father Jim and his fellows. As for priests who look in the door but are unwilling to go near an AIDS patient, well. . . .

SONDRA GORDON LANGFORD

Drawing the best

West Yarmouth, Mass.

To the Editors: Having read Maurice DeG. Ford's article ["Boston's Schools After the Battle," April 19] the thought occurred to me that you would be willing to listen to a voice from the past. I can say only this about the present in the Boston schools: except for the most dogged admirers of the Emperor's new clothes, Bostonians view forced busing as a stupid and tragic blunder that has brought nothing but trouble in its wake and has decimated the city school system. Mr. Ford's cited figures bear this out.

Since Mr. Ford does not name the new schools he had in mind, I can only say that there were new schools built in Boston in the decades since World War II, but not many of them. The 1950 census showed that Boston had a population of 801,000. By 1960 it had dropped to 697,000, in 1970 to 641,000, and in 1980 to 563,000. A city with a population dropping at that speed needs few new schools, and fewer still have been needed during the busing decade when the school population, by Mr. Ford's figures, dropped from 93,647 to 55,135. How a city could place new buildings to facilitate integration in a school system with white enrollment dropping from 53,593 to 15,327 in ten years, as blacks also sank in numbers from 31,963 to 26,662 is indeed a conundrum.

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might note carefully that last statistic. There is black flight from the Boston schools as well as white, but not so fast.

Mr. Ford finds the Boston schools "homogeneous to a stifling degree," finds a lack of innovation not surprising in a system dominated by persons of Irish descent, a system so humdrum and deteriorating that "Gradually even many Irish began to realize that something must be done. . . ." May I pass over without comment the racial slur and proffer instead what Theodore White, historian of the American presidency and a Boston Latin graduate, had to say about Latin School in his day, when the student body was about "forty Jewish and forty Irish, and the rest everything." White says, "It was the best kind of school. It gave everyone the same chance, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Protestant, black, then flung them out ruthlessly when they didn't make it. This was a magnet school, drawing the best from all over the city, before magnet schools were invented."

WILLIAM H. MARNELL

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Like the denied dragon

Kenmore, N.Y.

To the Editors: A big thanks to John Garvey for facing the pain in suffering and death ["The Last Solitude," May 17]. The article had me sitting up with an, "Aha, maybe there's a place for me in the 'new' church after all." Not only can I *not* relate to a "liturgy of death celebrating the happiness of death as entry into eternity" (referred to by Abigail McCarthy ["The Final Sting," May 3]), I have experienced alienation in the lack of the church's recognition of the pain I feel on the occasion of the death of people who have touched my life, with the result my pain grows like the denied dragon in the children's story.

Standing in awe in the face of mystery makes sense. Celebrating a hoped-for outcome at the time of a painful loss smacks of smugness that makes me most uneasy.

ADELAIDE A. WILEY

Cop-out on evil

Minneapolis, Minn.

To the Editors: I follow John Garvey faithfully and profit greatly from his articles. However, I dissent substantially on one point in his exploration of nonviolence ["Murderous Evil," September 20].

Mr. Garvey feels it is necessary to account for the unique evil of Hitler and company by seeking to identify a satanic force outside society. I suggest that an assertion by Mr. Garvey some years ago ["The Pope's Two Voices," March 27, 1981] should be invoked to correct his recent view. He said there: "Secularism's gift to modern religion is the fact that religious traditions must now make sense in some way or be abandoned." I often use this sensible assertion.

Here is how it could correct a "satanic" solution to Hitler's evil: Already, since Vatican II, people are less willing to accept temptation by devils to account for their evil. This means they increasingly see (if only implicitly) that human potential for evil is quite sufficient to account for whatever evil we find. Trying to pin even part of the accountability on satanic forces is a copout.

JAMES N. STUDER, O.S.B.

A welcome critique

Forestville, Md.

To the Editors: Rachelle Linner's piece on Hiroshima ["City of Myth & Reality," August 9] provided a welcome, overdue critique of Robert Jay Lifton's perspective on the "death city." Adding support to her suspicion that Lifton's claim (*hibakusha* underwent a "permanent encounter with death") is overstated and tends to neglect a whole range of more positive reactions, I would like to relate the following:

While researching my book *The Hiroshima Maidens*, published on August 6, 1985, I interviewed Robert Jay Lifton in his Yale office. He knew about the project that brought twenty-five disfigured Japanese women to America for plastic surgery in the mid-fifties, but only in general terms. He suggested that when I went to Hiroshima I consult Mr. Kaoru Ogura, a man who had been the main interpreter for him while he was interviewing survivors for his book *Death in Life*. In Hiroshima, Ogura was one of the first people I looked up, and he turned out to be a valuable guide for foreigners interested in a deeper understanding of what it meant to be a *hibakusha* than one received from most written accounts.

During one of our conversations I asked him if he had kept a copy of the questions that Lifton had posed to survivors, thinking it might be a useful aid to my own interviews with the Hiroshima Maidens. He said he had, but that he did not recommend it because he felt that Lifton had had very definite ideas about the survivors' experiences *before he had conducted his interviews*, and that the information and anecdotes Lifton had elicited from his subjects tended to conform to his research objectives. In short, Ogura felt that Lifton had known what he was looking for ahead of time, and that the manner of his investigation all but assured his conclusions. Ironically, when Lifton's book was translated into Japanese, the title was reversed and came out *Life in Death*.

RODNEY BARKER

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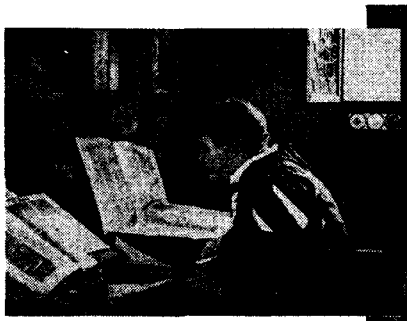

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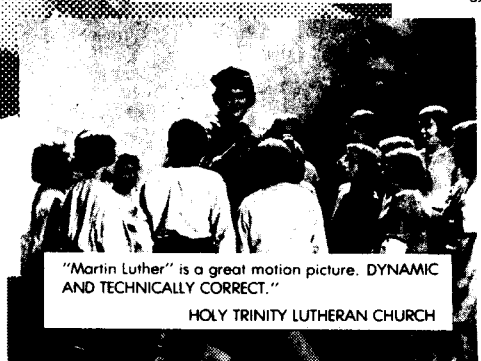

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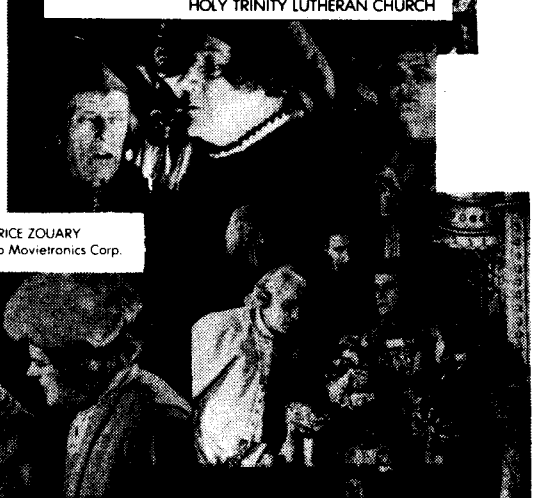

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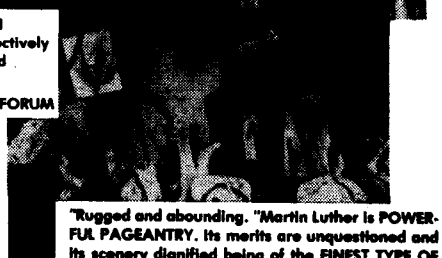

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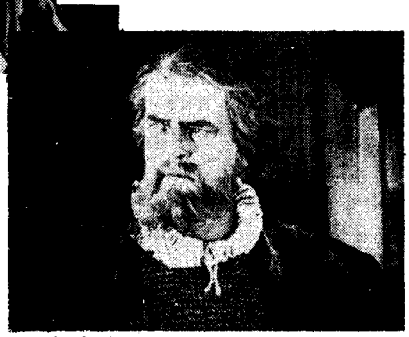

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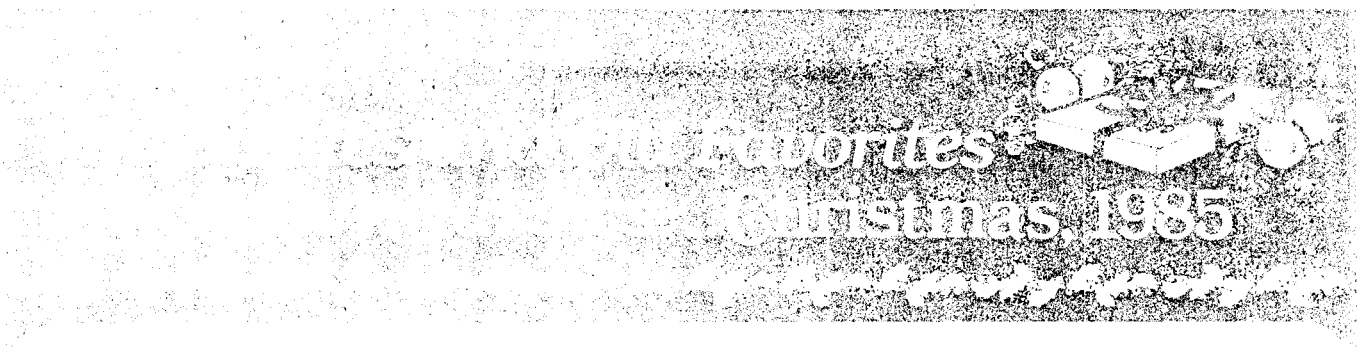

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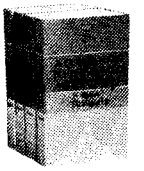

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